





INTRODUCTION

"It will be apparent that it is difficult to discern which properties each thing possesses in reality."

(Democritus, 8th century B.C.)

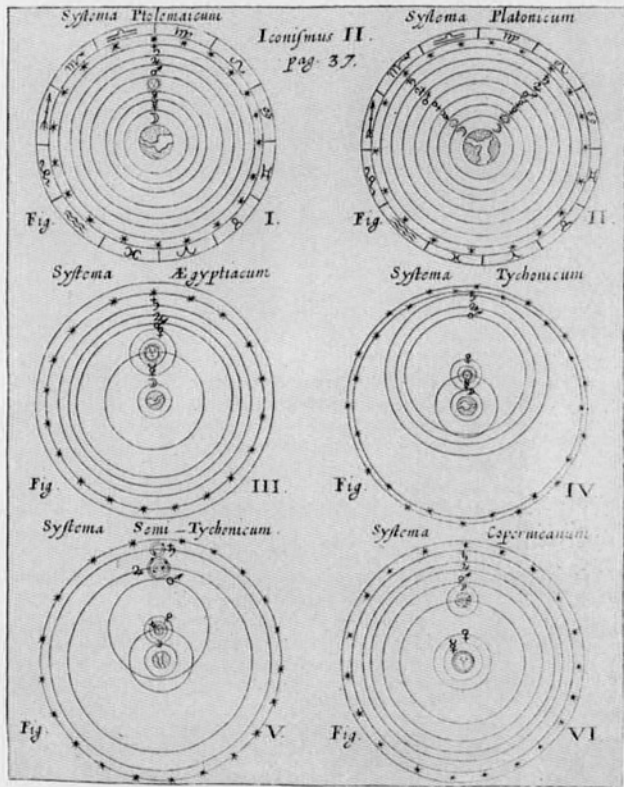


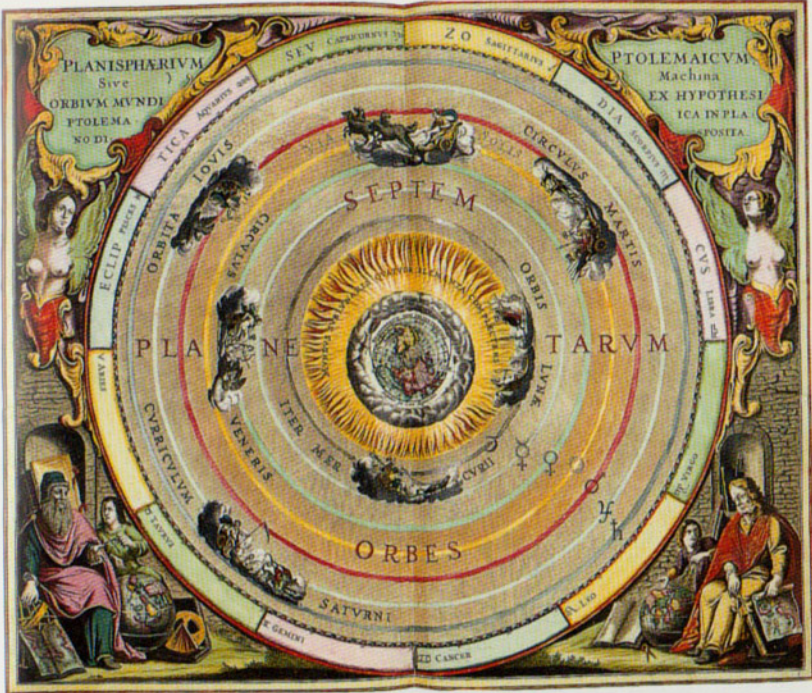
MACROCOSM

For Plato, the universe or great world order was created by God the creator as a manifestation and illustration of his own perfection: "(...) and so he formed it as a single visible living thing which was to include all related creatures (...). By turning it he shaped it into a sphere (...), giving it the most perfect form of all."

(Timaeus, c. 410 BC)

Comparative depiction of cosmological systems

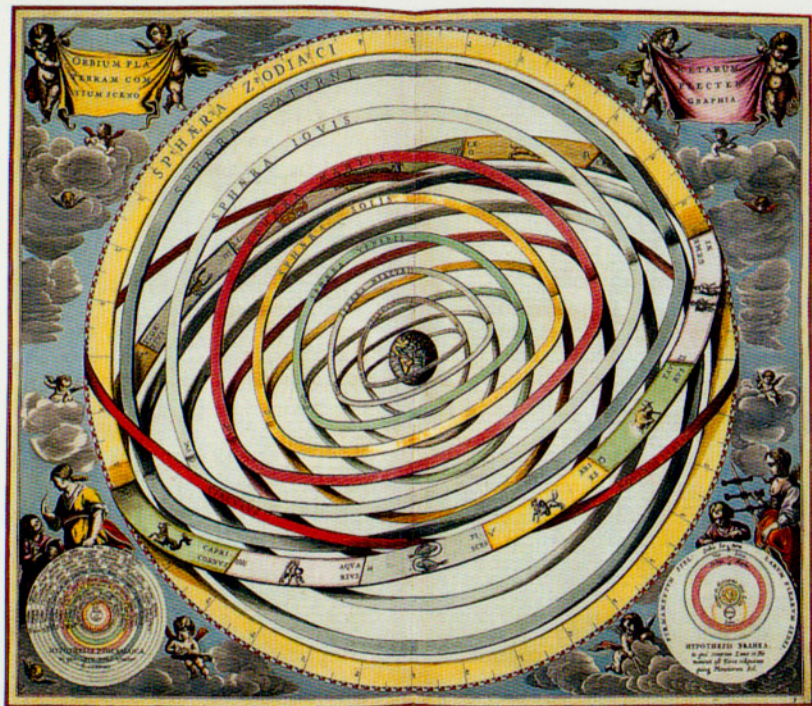




Planispheric depiction of the Ptolemaic system.

The illustration shows the Aristotelian stratification of the four elements in the sublunary region: the globe of the earth consists of the heaviest and most impure elements of earth and water, then comes air, and finally, adjacent to the sphere of the moon, is the lightest and purest element, fire.

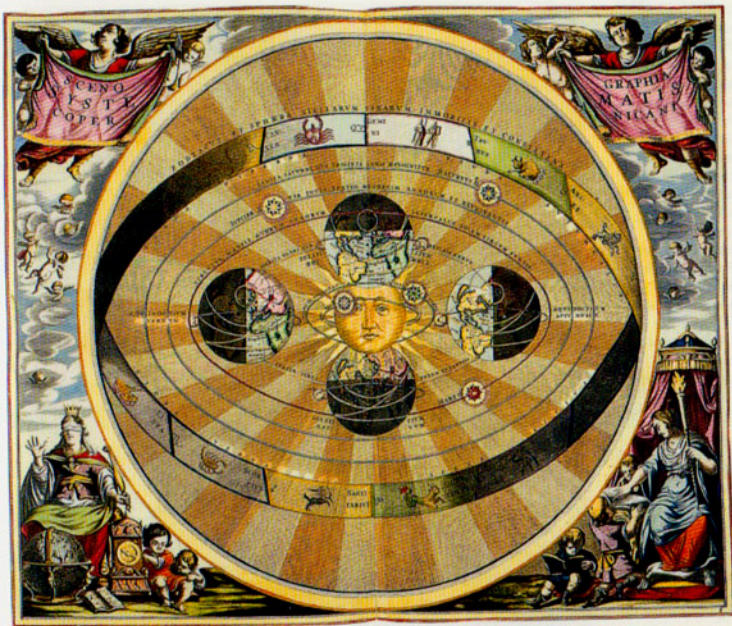
A. Cellarius, *Harmonia Macrocosmica*, Amsterdam, 1660



Spatial depiction of the Ptolemaic system

The outermost, opaque sphere of the fixed stars was known as the *Primum Mobile*, the "first moved", because, driven by divine love, it caused the motion of all other spheres.

A. Cellarius, *Harmonia Macrocosmica*,
Amsterdam, 1660



"At the centre of all things resides the sun. Could we find a better place in this most beautiful of all temples, from whence this light illuminates all things at once? Rightly is it called the lamp, the spirit, the ruler of the universe. For Hermes Trismegistus it is the invisible god, Sophocles' Elektra calls

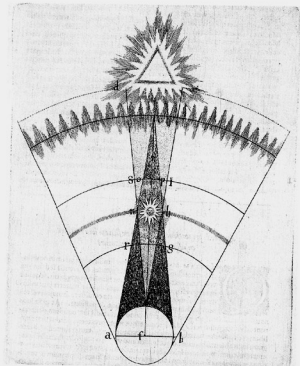
it the all-seeing. Thus, the sun sits on its royal throne and guides its children, which circle it." (Copernicus, *De revolutionibus orbium caelestium*, 1543)

A. Cellarius, *Harmonia Macrocosmica*, Amsterdam, 1660

The World

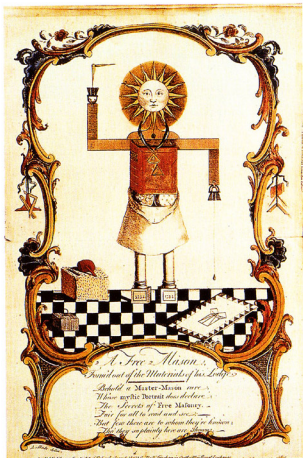
For the Rosicrucian doctor and philosopher Robert Fludd the sun is the heart of the macrocosm. It is at the precise point of intersection of the two pyramids of light and darkness, in the 'sphere of equilibrium' of form and matter. Within it dwells the life-giving cosmic soul.

R. Fludd, *Utriusque Cosmi*, Vol. I, Oppenheim, 1617



In Masonic symbolism, the sun represents the imperishable spirit, immaterial gold.

*A Freemason,
formed from the
materials of his
lodge, engraving,
1754*



The World

The assignment of the nine spheres to the nine Muses was the result of a harmonic vision by the Neo-Pythagorean, Martianus Capella (5th century A.D.). The scale covers a full octave.

Tragedy is assigned to the sun, comedy to the earth.

Athanasius Kircher,
Ars magna lucis,
Rome, 1665

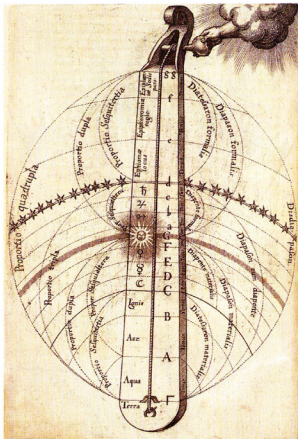


The World

According to Fludd, "the monochord is the internal principle which, from the centre of the whole, brings about the harmony of all life in the cosmos."

By altering the tension of the strings, God, the "Great Chord", is able to determine the density of all materials between Empyreum and Earth.

Robert Fludd,
Utriusque Cosmi,
Vol. I, Oppenheim,
1617

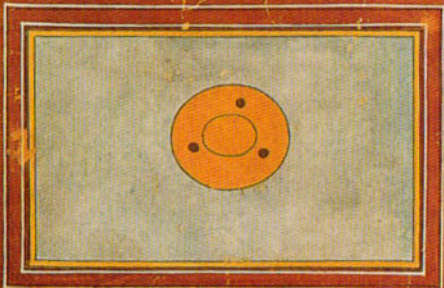
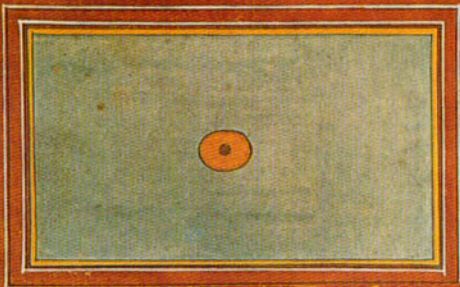


Genesis

In the Tantric vision, an invisible power-point (bindu) produces the primal matter (prakriti), which consists of three qualities (gunas): sattva (essence, peace), rajas (energy, passion) and tamas (substance, inertia).

At the beginning of creation the three are in equilibrium; only their disharmony brings forth the world of diversity.

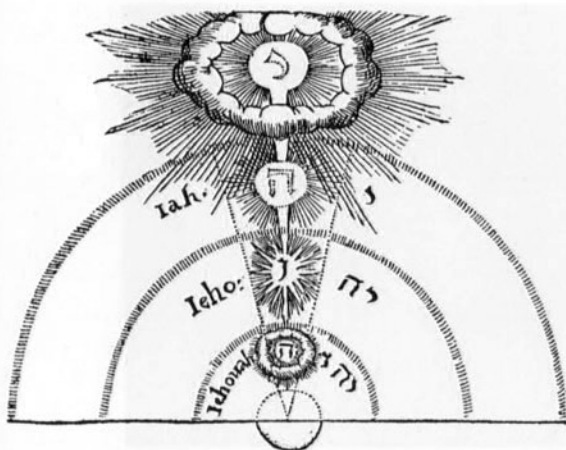
*Painting,
Rajasthan, c. 18th
century*



Genesis

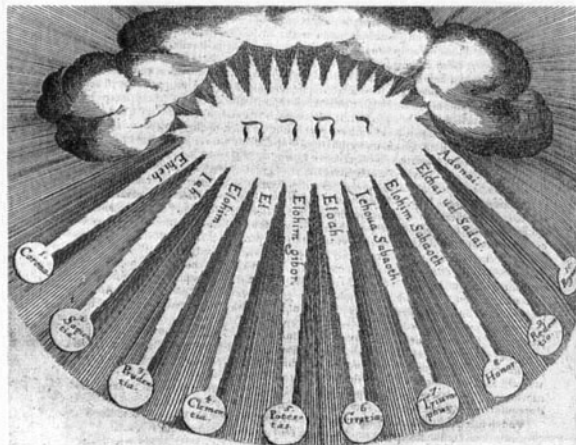
Successive utterances of the divine name produce the four worlds of the Cabala: Aziluth, Beriah, Yezirah and Assiya.

Robert Fludd,
Utriusque Cosmi,
Vol. II, Frankfurt,
1621



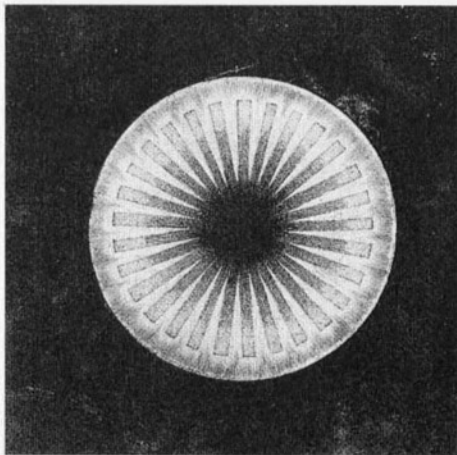
From the great tetragrammaton flow the ten "epithets" of God.

Robert Fludd,
Philosophia Sacra,
Frankfurt, 1626

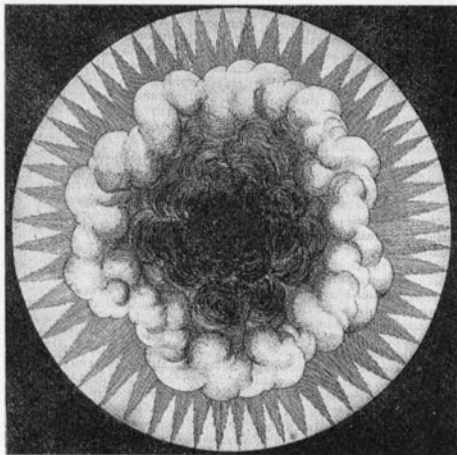


Genesis

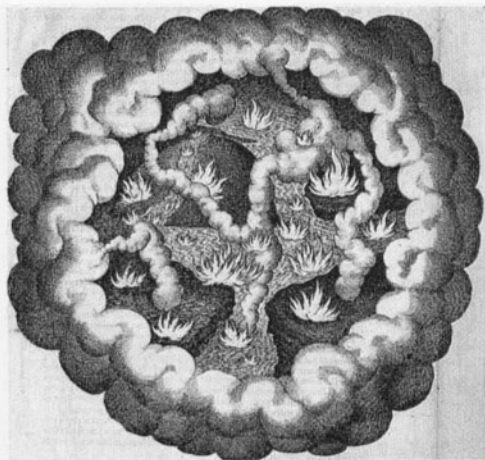
Light, the inexhaustible source of all things, appears in the darkness and with it the watery spirits that begin to divide into near (bright) and far (dark).



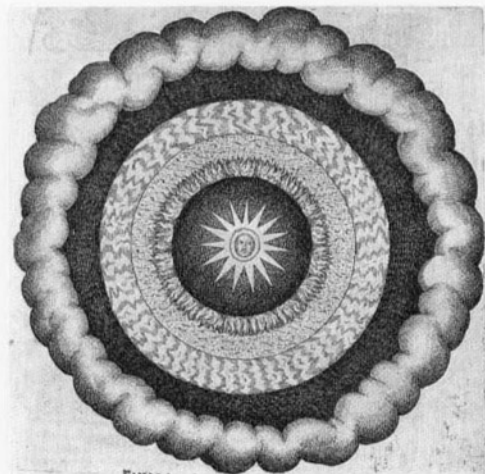
In the centre are the dark waters, far from the light, forming the source of matter; at the edge are the upper waters, from which the divine fiery heaven (Empyreum) will unfold. The bright cloud in between is a state "called variously the Earth-spirit, the Spirit of Mercury, the Ether and the Quintessence."



Robert Fludd,
Utriusque Cosmi,
Vol. I, Oppenheim,
1617



The chaos of the elements from the lower waters "is a confused and undigested mass in which the four elements fight against each other."



The ideal final state of material is achieved when the elements are arranged according to the degrees of their density: (from outside to inside) Earth, Water, Air and Fire. In the centre appears the Sun, gold.

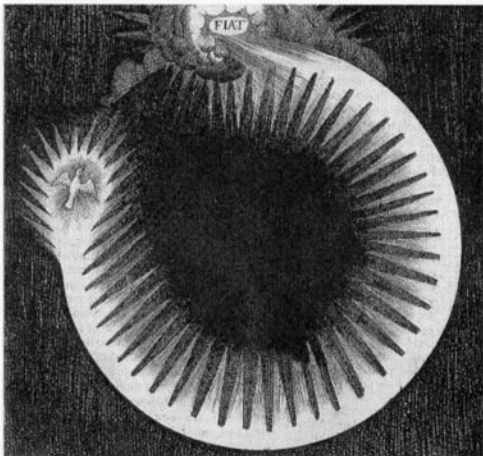
Robert Fludd,
Utriusque Cosmi,
Vol. I, Oppenheim,
1617

Genesis

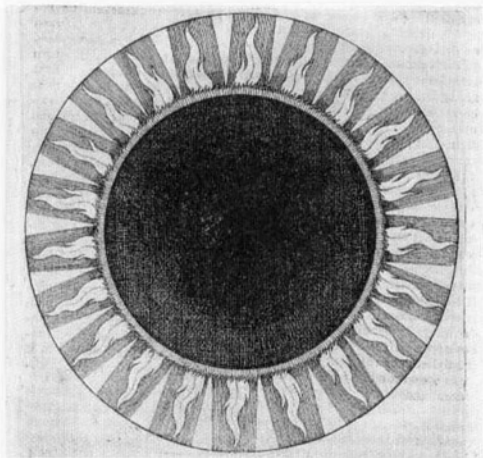
The first day of creation:

"Let there be light!"

The dove is the spirit of God.

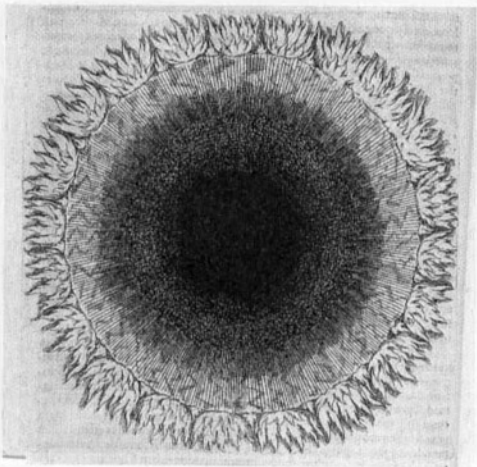


"The uncreated light of the spirit reflected in the sphere of the fiery firmament as in a mirror, and the reflections in their turn, are the first manifestations of created light."

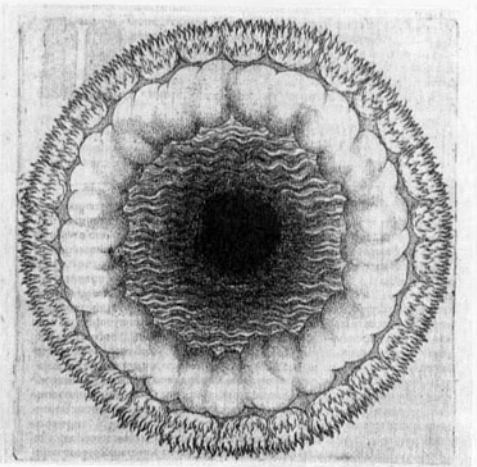


Robert Fludd,
Utriusque Cosmi,
Vol. I, Oppenheim,
1617

The earth belongs to the lowest level of the elements, the sediment of creation.



According to the proportions, the grossest element couples with the most subtle when the elements of air and water are produced.



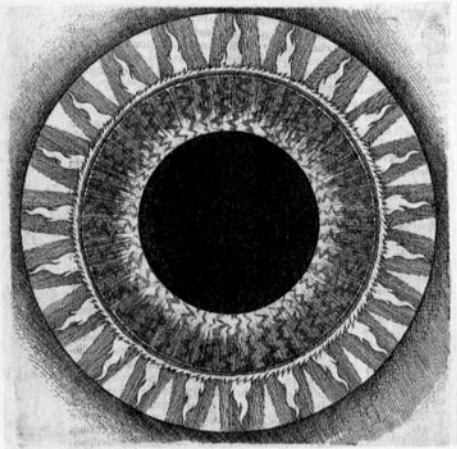
Robert Fludd,
Utriusque Cosmi,
Vol. I, Oppenheim,
1617

Genesis

The second day

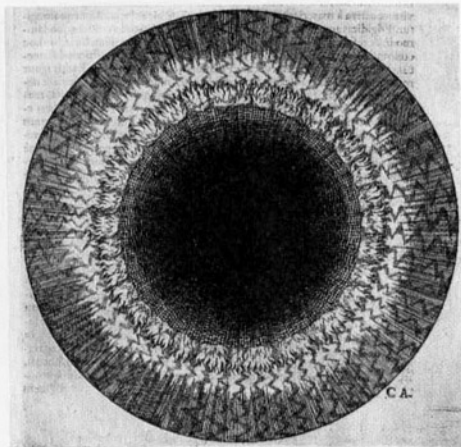
"And God said, Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water (...) And God called the vault Heaven." (Genesis 1: 6 and 8)

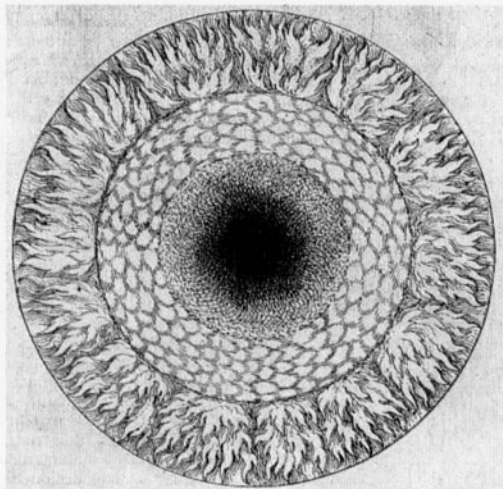
The ethereal sphere with the fixed stars and planets divides the upper waters (Empyreum) from the lower.



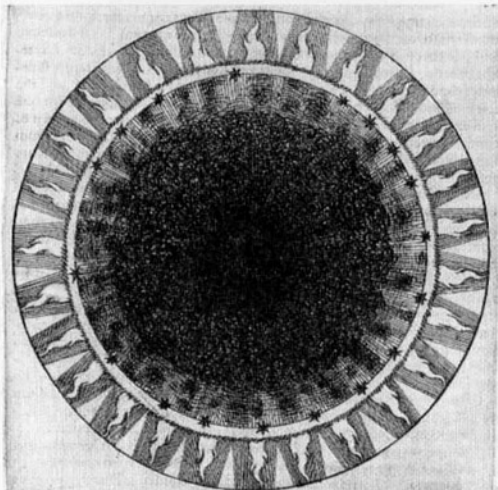
The third day

Fire arises as the first and most subtle element.





The sequence by which the elements are ordered in an ascending degree of purity – earth, water, air and fire – is repeated in the structure of the entire cosmos.

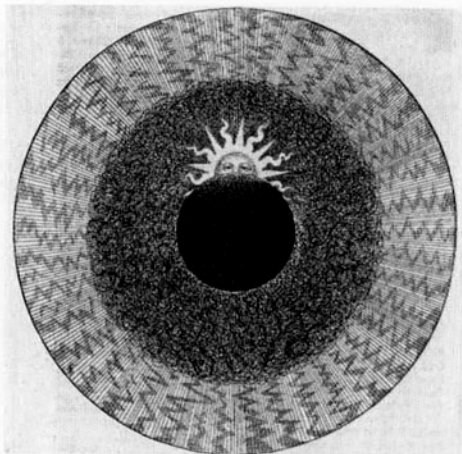


The stars on the outer edge of the ethereal sphere only became visible with the creation of the sun, for they store its light.

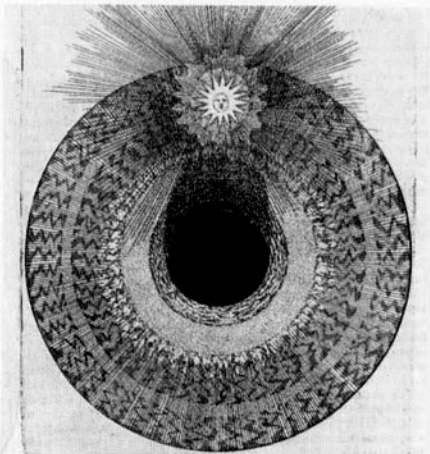
Robert Fludd,
Utriusque Cosmi,
Vol. I, Oppenheim,
1617

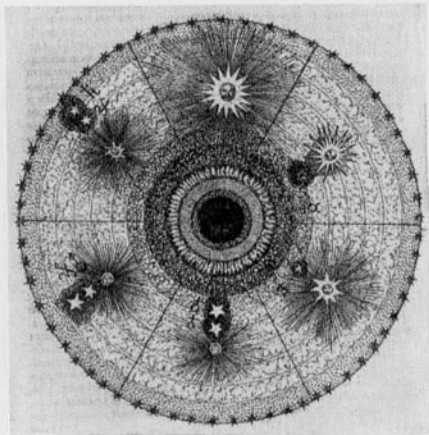
Genesis

"The perturbations attendant on creation had caused some of the celestial light to be trapped in the cold mass of the central earth. Obeying the law of gravity, this celestial substance began to rise towards its rightful place in the heavens, and it was thus that our sun was formed."

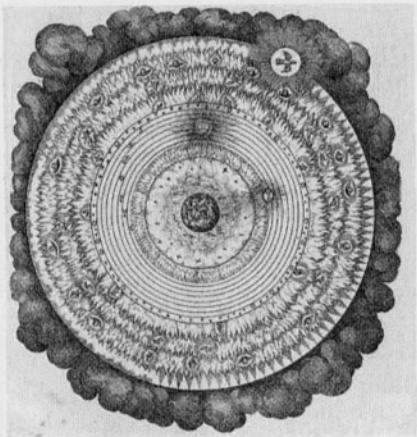


In the firmament the sun is the visible representative of the divine fire and of love. Its corresponding part in the human body is the heart.





When the sinking, hot rays of the sun encounter rising, watery steam, they condense and give rise to the planets.



The spirit of God hovers as a dove above perfect creation, which is already menaced by the Fall.

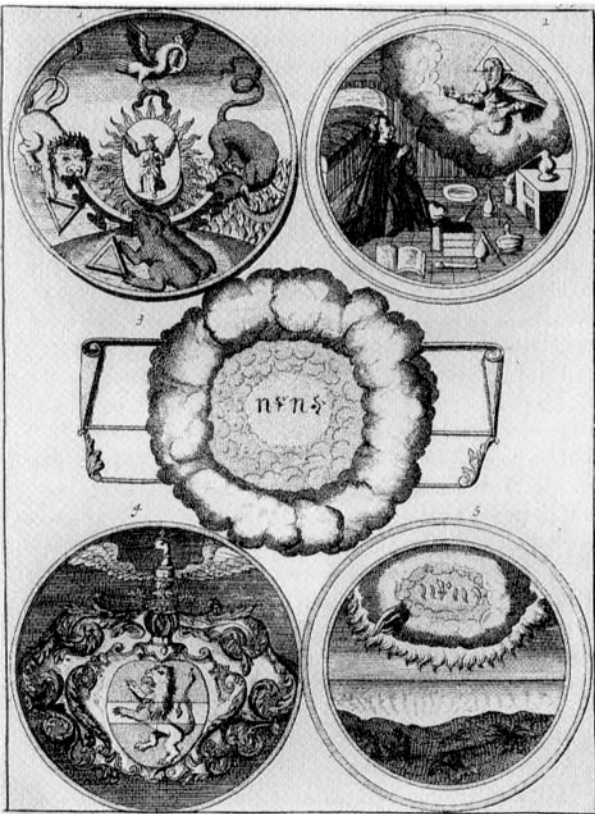


OPUS MAGNUM

In reference to the divine work of creation and the plan of salvation within it, the alchemistic process was called the 'Great Work'. In it, a mysterious chaotic source material called *materia prima*, containing opposites still incompatible and in the most violent conflict, is gradually guided towards a redeemed state of perfect harmony, the healing 'Philosophers' Stone' or *lapis philosophorum*: "First we bring together, then we putrefy, we break down what has been putrified, we purify the divided, we unite the purified and harden it. In this way is One made from man and woman."

(Büchlein vom Stein der Weisen, 1778)

Genesis in the retort



1. The emblems of the lapis on the crescent moon. Normal gold (lion) must be twice driven by anti-mony (wolf) in order to lose its impurities. The dragon is philosophical quicksilver (Mercury).

2. The alchemist assures himself of God's presence in the Work.

3. Chaos.

4. The coat of arms of the lapis.

5. The four elements.

*J.C. Barchusen,
Elementa chymicae,
Leiden, 1718*

Genesis in the retort

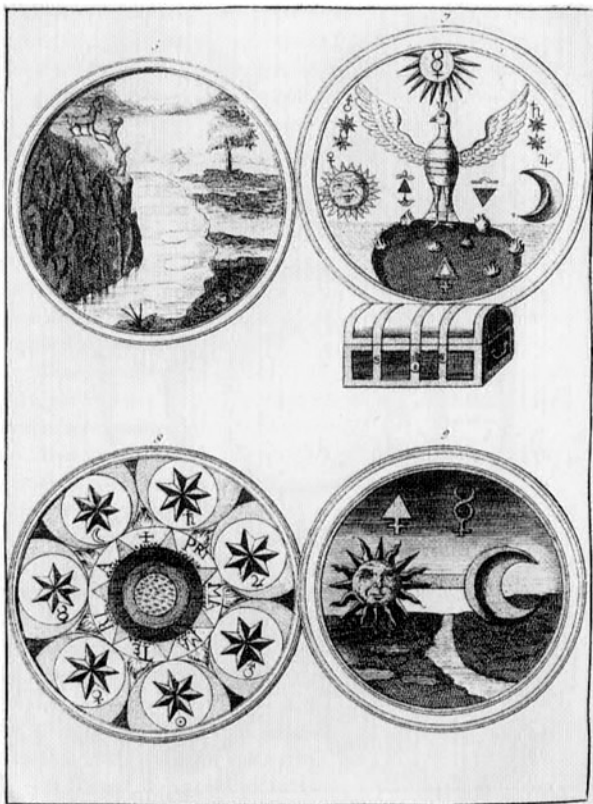
6. The chamois represent spirit and soul, which unite to form philosophical mercury.

7. The six planets embody the metals to which the bird mercury is related. The locked trunk says that the path to this quicksilver is hidden.

8. The inner circles are the four elements, which form the basic material of the seven metals (fixed stars).

9. Sulphur (sun) and mercury (moon), male and female.

*J. C. Barchusen,
Elementa chemi-
cae, Leiden, 1718*



Genesis in the retort

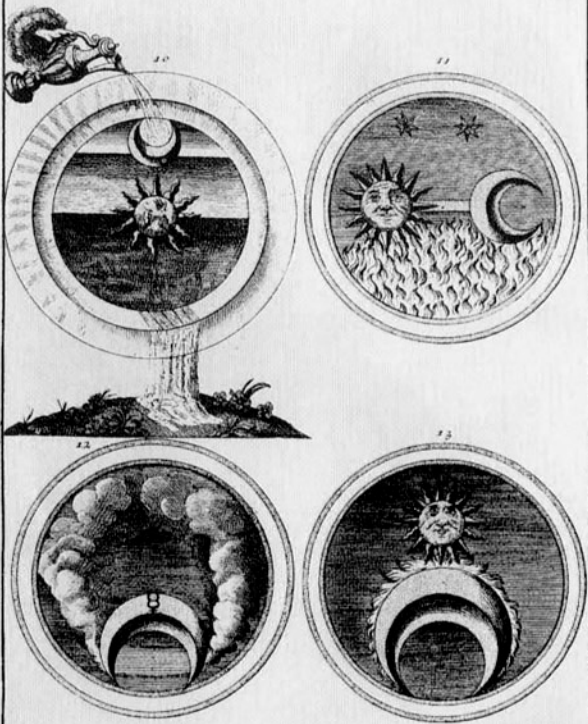
10. Through contact with the moon and the sun, philosophical mercury attains the power of fertilizing the earth.

11. Sulphur and mercury must be freed by fire from the material which contains them.

12. Purification of philosophical mercury by sublimation.

13. Philosophical mercury is joined once more to its sulphur, so that a homogeneous liquid is produced.

*J.C. Barchusen,
Elementa chemi-
cae, Leiden, 1718*



Genesis in the retort

14. Gold (lion) is purified by mixture with anti-mony (wolf).

15. and transformed by dissolution into philosophical sulphur

16. The furnace.

17. The retort in which sulphur and mercury are united.

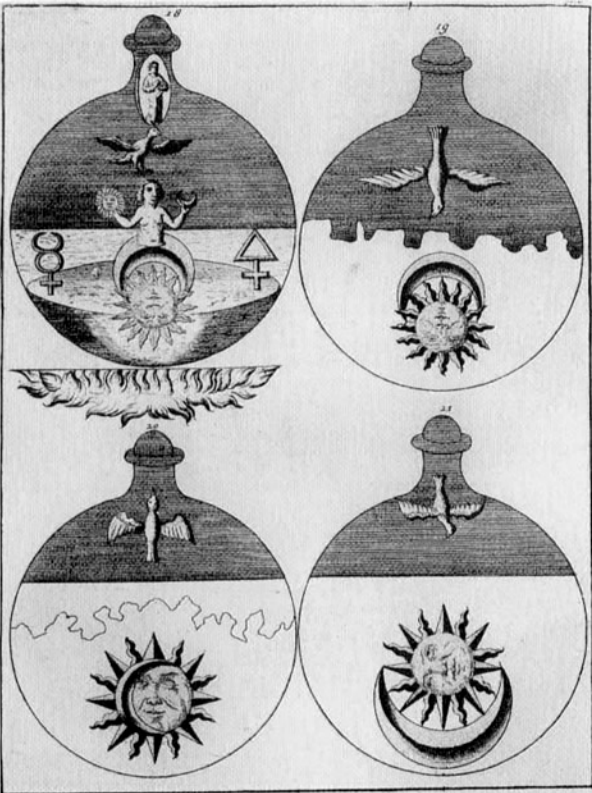
*J.C. Barchusen,
Elementa chemi-
cae, Leiden, 1718*



18. Philosophical quicksilver consists of liquid, mercurial components (Azoth) and solid sulphurous parts (Latona). The bird is the mercurial "spirit" that carries out the Work.

19–21. The state of putrefaction: here the four elements separate and the soul emerges from the body. The ascending bird represents the distillation of philosophical mercury. The descending bird indicates that the distillate must be repeatedly poured on to the physical residue.

*J.C. Barchusen,
Elementa chemi-
cae, Leiden, 1718*

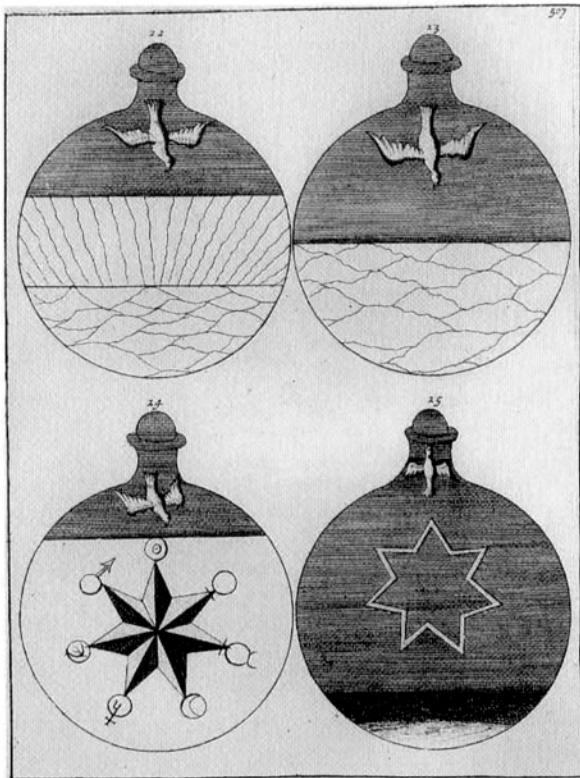


Genesis in the retort

22.–23. The blackness of putrefaction (nigredo) is purified by Azoth, the living spirit, which is extracted from the quicksilver.

24.–25. Putrefaction is the gate to the *conjunctio*, and conception. It is the key to transmutation. The star indicates that the matter is self-enclosed, and that the seeds of the seven metals lie within it.

J. C. Barchusen,
Elementa chemi-
cae, Leiden, 1718

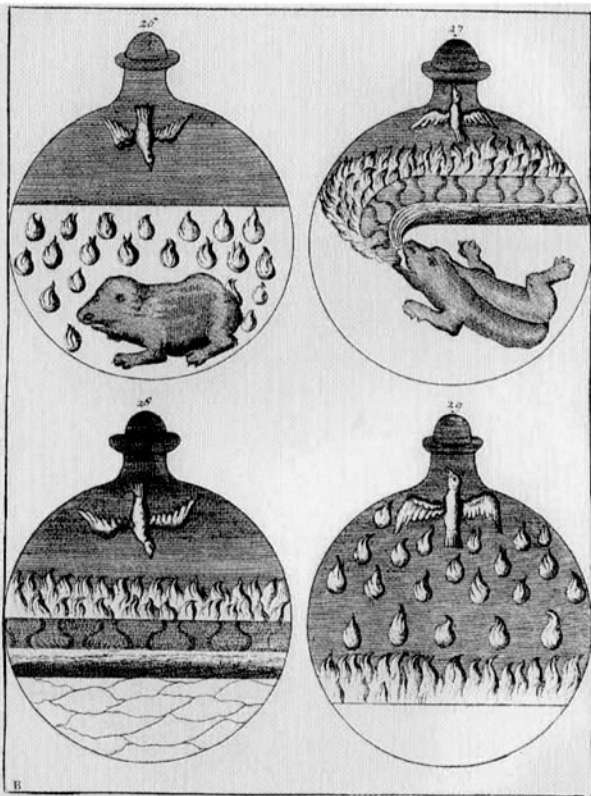


Genesis in the retort

26.–27. The black material (toad) turns white if Azoth (dove) is poured on it again. With the application of great heat, it then yields all of its liquid components.

28.–29. Under the effects of heat the elements begin to re-stratify.

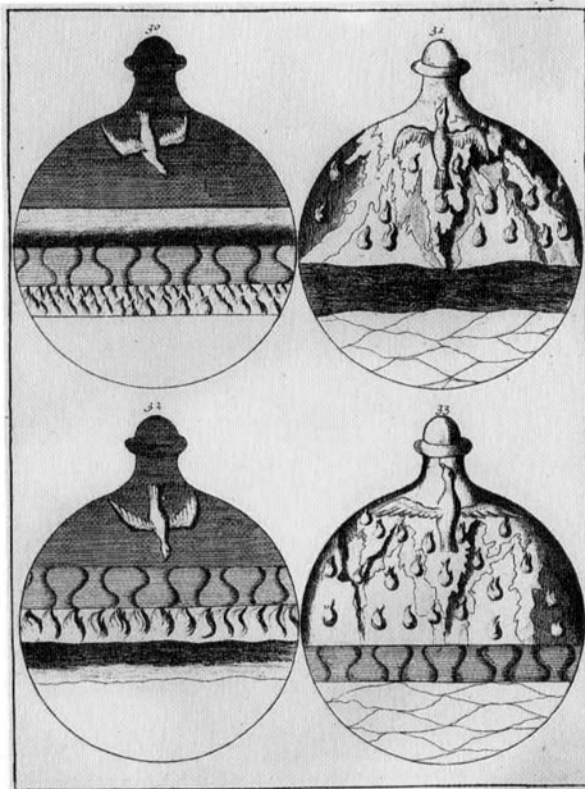
*J.C. Barchusen,
Elementa chemi-
cae, Leiden, 1718*

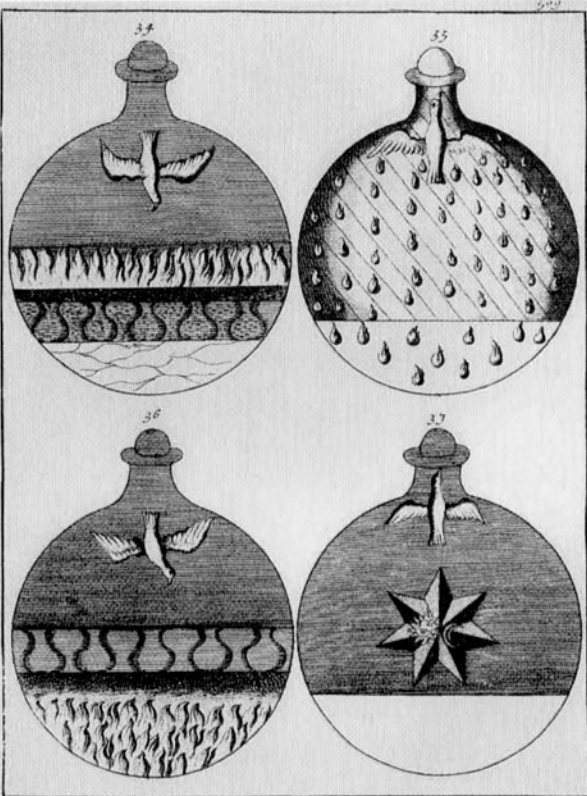


Genesis in the retort

31.-33. The
restratification of
the elements in
the glass occurs
by repeatedly
extracting the
mercurial spirit
and then pouring
it back.

*J. C. Barchusen,
Elementa chemi-
cae, Leiden, 1718*





34.–36. In the seventh distillation the lapis attains its fiery nature.

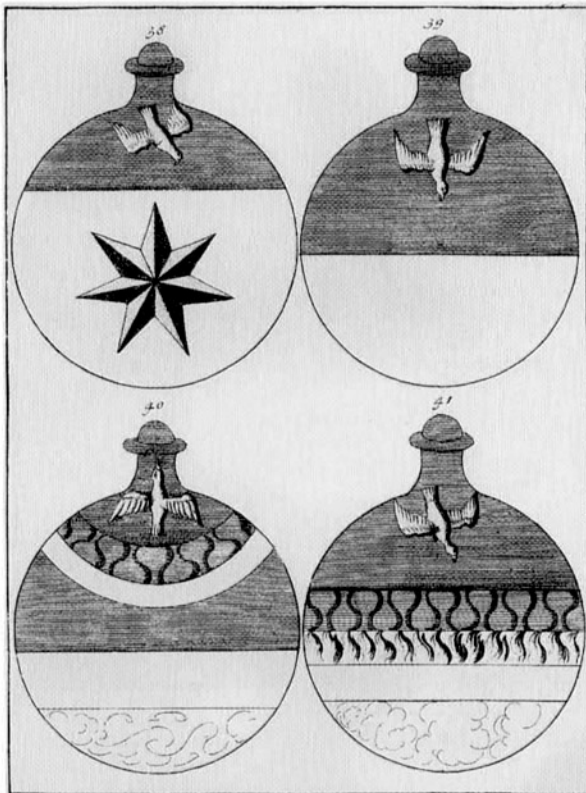
37. The appearance of Apollo and Luna announces that the stone will soon have the capacity for transmutation.

*J.C. Barchusen,
Elementa chemi-
cae, Leiden, 1718*

Genesis in the retort

38.-41. In the
ninth distillation
of philosophical
mercury the
watery matter,
followed by air,
strives upwards.

J.C. Barchusen,
*Elementa chemi-
cae*, Leiden, 1718

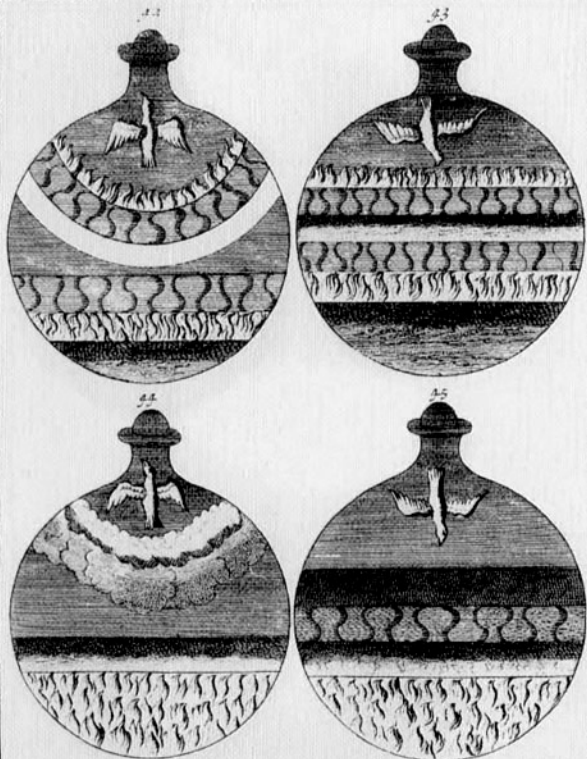


Genesis in the retort

42.-45. In the tenth distillation and the subsequent moistening the elements are divided in two.

The fiery nature of the *lapis* lowers itself to the ground. The water turns into clouds.

J.C. Barchusen,
*Elementa chemi-
cae*, Leiden, 1718



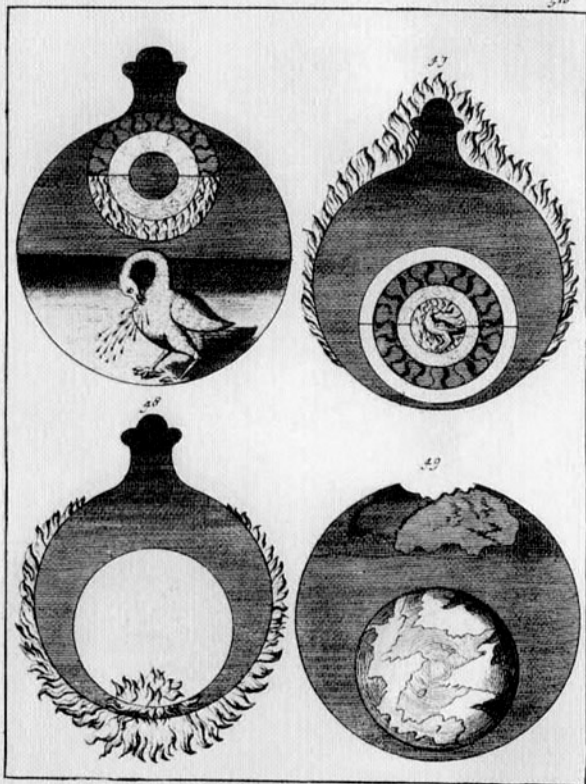
Genesis in the retort

46. The final sublimation of the *lapis*. Here it is represented as a pelican, said to bring its dead young (the base metals) back to life with its own blood (tincture).

47. The final solidification (*fixatio*) of the *lapis*, which rises as a phoenix in the flames.

48.-49. The elements are united and the Work completed.

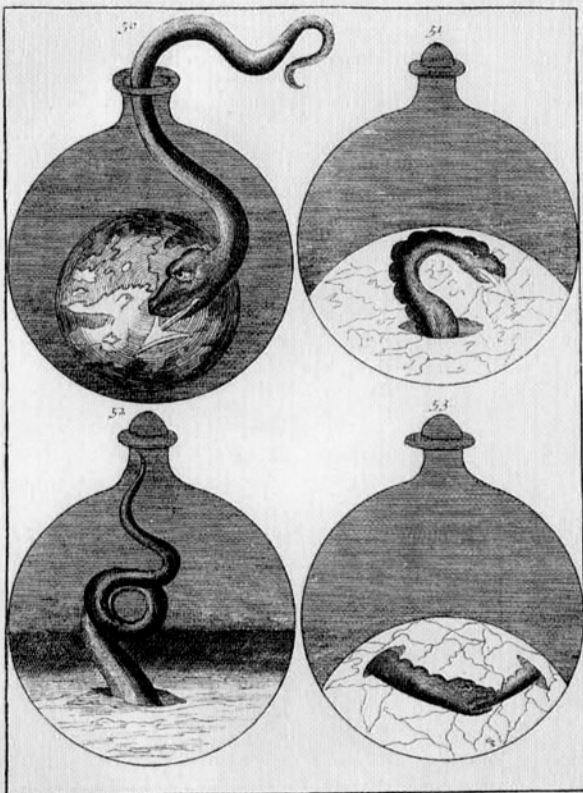
J.C. Barchusen,
Elementa chemicae, Leiden, 1718



Genesis in the retort

50.-53. The more transparent and subtle the consistency of the *lapis*, the higher its penetrative capacities and the greater its strength of colour. In order to intensify this, further sublimations occur: it is now fertilized with philosophical mercury (serpent), "until the serpent has swallowed its own tail" and the *lapis* is dissolved.

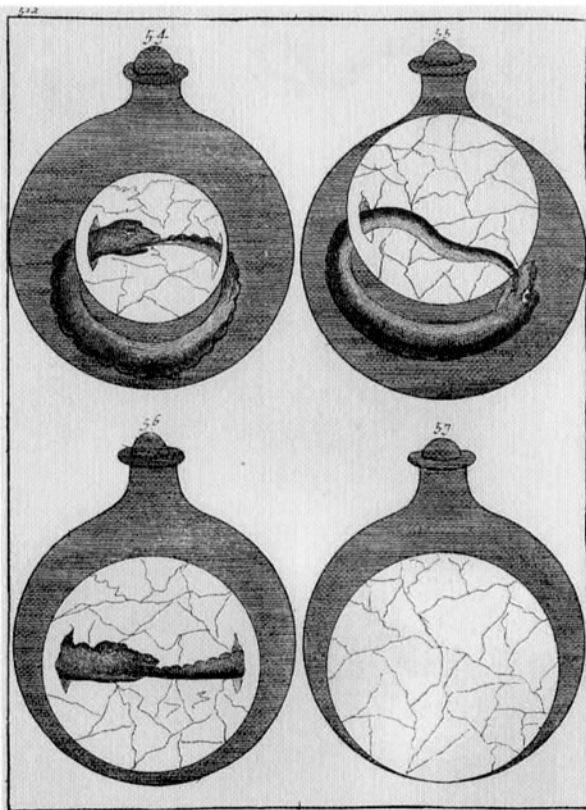
*J.C. Barchusen,
Elementa chemi-
cae, Leiden, 1718*



Genesis in the retort

The dissolution of the *lapis* (54) and the repeated distillations or sublimations (55) and subsequent moistenings (56) lead to its final resolidification (57)

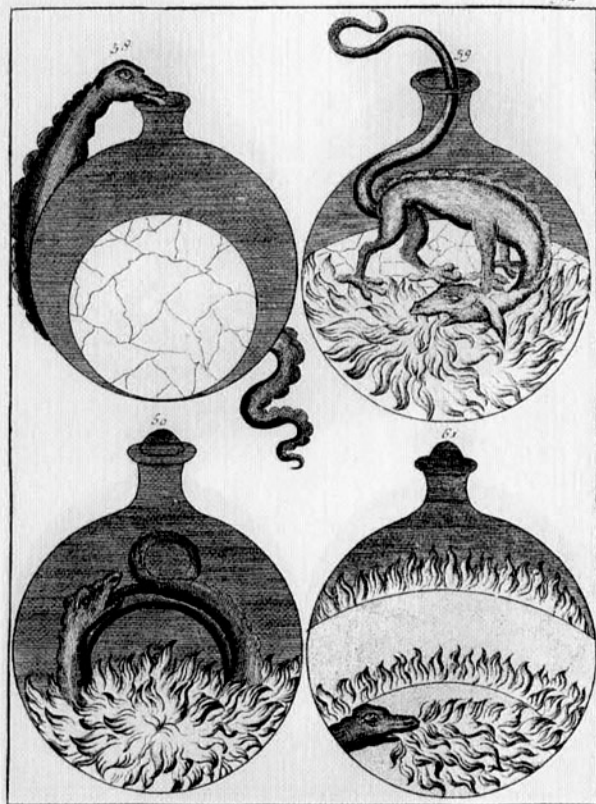
J.C. Barchusen,
*Elementa chemi-
cae*, Leiden, 1718



Genesis in the retort

Azoth is poured on once more (58), and the intensity of the fire is raised (59–60), for the soul must be “sweated out” (61).

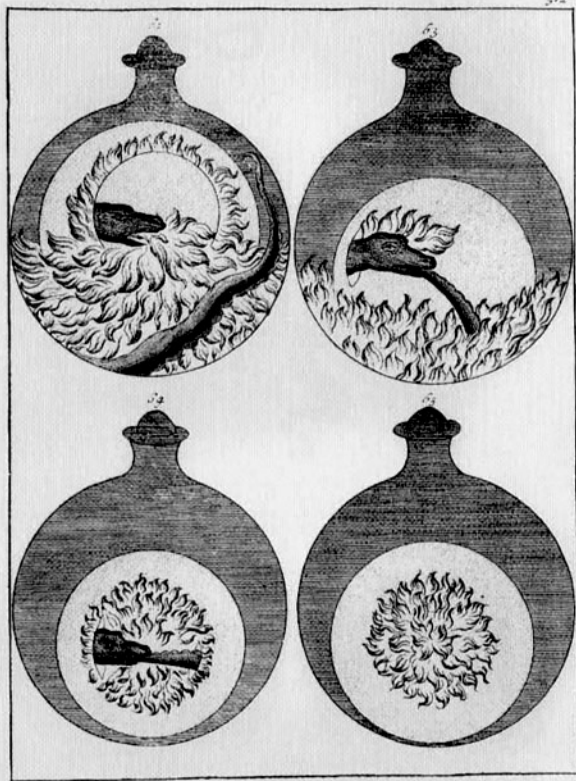
*J. C. Barchusen,
Elementa chemi-
cae, Leiden, 1718*



Genesis in the retort

62.–65. The *lapis*
must be burned
strongly and for a
long time.

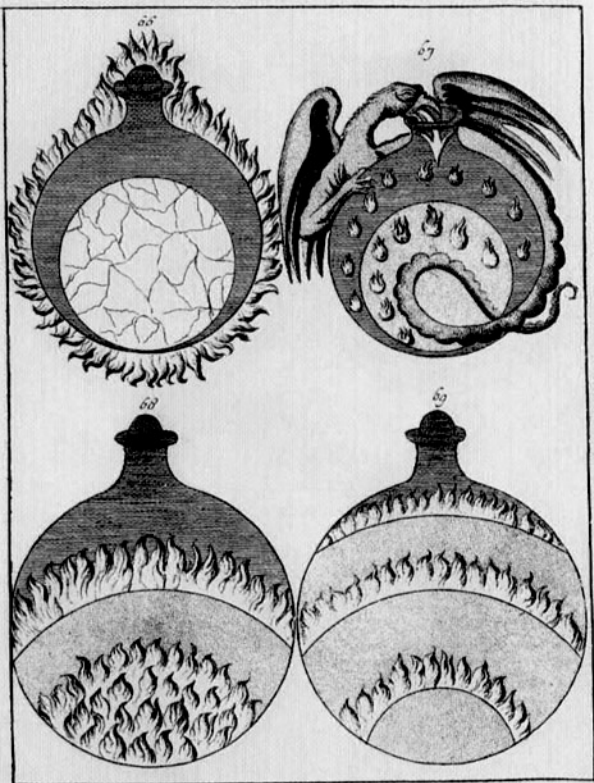
J. C. Barchusen,
*Elementa chemi-
cae*, Leiden, 1718



Genesis in the retort

67.-69. The mass is moistened again, because the more often the stone is distilled the greater is its capacity to penetrate and to colour (tincture).

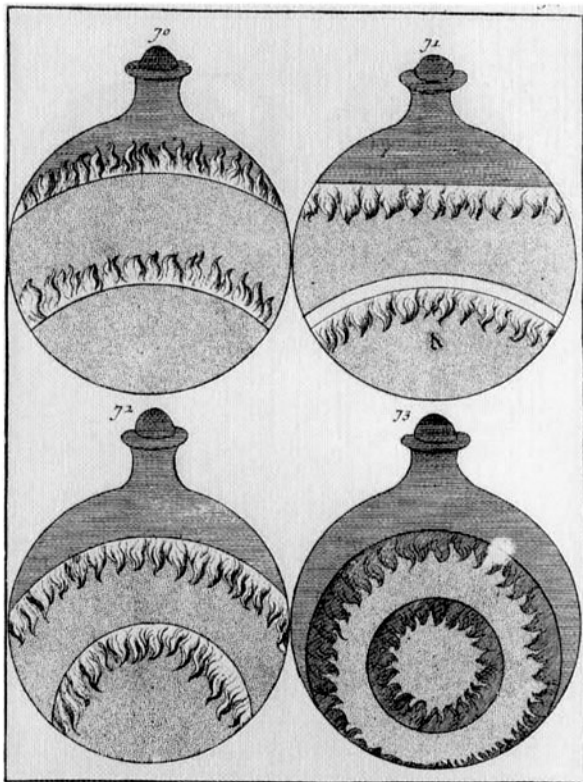
J. C. Barchusen,
*Elementa chemi-
cae*, Leiden, 1718



Genesis in the retort

70.-74. In a torture by fire lasting several days, the stone now matures to its perfection and resurrection.

J. C. Barchusen,
*Elementa chemi-
cae*, Leiden, 1718



Genesis in the retort

75.-78. "After much suffering and torment I was resurrected large, pure and immaculate."

Spirit and soul have now completely penetrated the body, father and son are united, transience and death have lost all their power.

*J. C. Barchusen,
Elementa chemi-
cae, Leiden, 1718*



Genesis in the retort

In the Saturnine phase of the work, Mercurius fires up the "primaterial" dragon and gives it wings: that is, it begins to vaporize. The blood with which he feeds it is the universal spirit, the soul of all things.

*S. Trismosin,
Splendor solis,
London,
16th century*



Rebuild our diad dragon with blood, so that he may live

Genesis in the retort

After the Saturnine restriction Jupiter promises good fortune and wealth. The phase of multiplication in the Work is assigned to him.

*S. Trismosin,
Splendor solis,
London,
16th century*



Genesis in the retort

As the number of
heads of the bird
reveals, the matter
has now been
thrice sublimated,
and is in a gaseous
state. Bellicose
Mars arrives.

*S. Trismosin,
Splendor solis,
London,
16th century*



The dissolved bodies are returned to true spirit.

Genesis in the retort

The sun is the ruler of Leo, the sign of the zodiac, to whom, according to the inscription on the base, the matter should be thrown on the base as food.

*S. Trismosin,
Splendor solis,
London,
16th century*



Give our living dragon the wild lion to swallow.

Genesis in the retort

Mercury arrives with two cocks, the heralds of the dawn. The pure virgin, embodying the phase of whitening (albedo), brings a happy message. Still subject to the moon and the night, she is already carrying the son of the Sun.

*S. Trismosin,
Splendor solis,
London,
16th century*



The son is born, he is greater than I.

**Genesis
in the retort**

Luna, who governs
all things moist,
gives birth to the
immaculate
purple-robed
king: red tincture,
the universal
medicine that can
heal all afflictions.

*S. Trismosin,
Splendor solis,
London,
16th century*



Now death is abolished and the son rules with his redness.

Genesis in the retort

"The wind bears it
in its belly."

The birth of the
philosophers'
stone occurs in the
air.

*Michael Maier,
Atalanta fugiens,
Oppenheim, 1618*



"Its nurse is the
Earth."

Mercurial water
nourishes it.

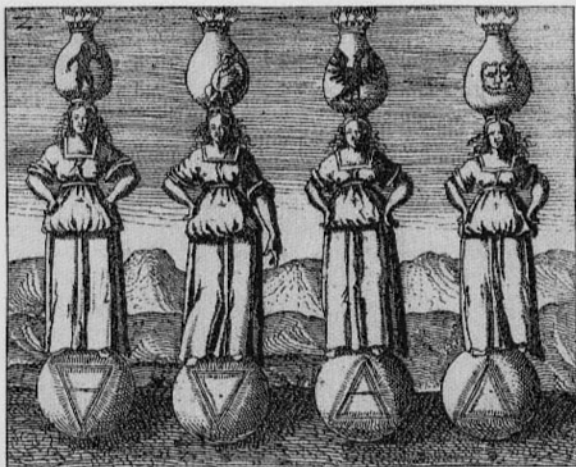
*Michael Maier,
Atalanta fugiens,
Oppenheim, 1618*



Genesis in the retort

Corresponding to the four elements (left to right: earth, water, air and fire) are the four phases in the alchemical Work and four degrees of fire.

*D. Stolcius von
Stolckenberg,
Viridarium
chymicum,
Frankfurt, 1624*



The source material for the *lapis* can be found everywhere: in the earth, on the mountains, in the air and in the nourishing water.

*Michael Maier,
Atalanta fugiens,
Oppenheim, 1618*





Saturn as ruler of the two signs of the zodiac, Aquarius and Capricorn. "The ancient pagans saw Saturn not only as time, but also as the Prima Materia of all metal things, under whose natural-alchymistic rule lay the truly golden age." (Heinrich Khunrath, *Vom hyealischen Chaos*, Frankfurt edition, 1708)

pag. 68.



"Behold, in Saturn
a Gold lies en-
closed (...). Just so
man lies now, af-
ter his fall, in a
great, formless,
bestial, dead like-
ness
(...) He is like the
coarse stone in
Saturn (...) the
outer body is a
stinking cadaver,
because it still
lives in poison."
(Jacob Böhme, *De
signatura rerum*)

J. Isaak Hollandus,
*Hand der
Philosophen* (1667),
Vienna edition,
1746

Saturnine night

An allegory of the
Chaos of the ele-
ments and the
need to harmonize
them.

Aurora consurgens,
late 14th century



Saturnine night



"Take the grey wolf, the child of Saturn (...) and throw him the body of the King. And when he has swallowed him, build a big fire and throw the Wolf into it, so that he burns up, and then the King will be liberated again."

*Michael Maier,
Atalanta fugiens,
Oppenheim, 1618*



For the purification of gold (king) the impurities were alloyed with antimony, which was added to the melt. As antimony attracted and swallowed impurities, it was called the "philosophers' magnet", the "wolf of metals".

*D. Stolcius v.
Stolcenberg,
Viridarium
chymicum,
Frankfurt, 1624*

Saturnine night

"Ovid (...) writes of an ancient sage who wished to rejuvenate himself. He was to cause himself to be divided up and boiled until completely cooked, then the limbs would reunite and rejuvenate most powerfully."

*S. Trismosin,
Splendor solis,
London,
16th century*



Saturnine night

Trismosin tells of an angel (a code name for the mercurial components of the *Materia* which can be sublimated), which helps "a man, black as a Moor" out of an "unclean slime" (the putrefied sediment in the retort), clads him in crimson and leads him to heaven.

*S. Trismosin,
Splendor solis,
London,
16th century*



Torment of the metals

Hermes Trismegistus and the creative fire that unites the polarities.

*D. Stolcius von
Stolckenberg, Viri-
darium chymicum,
Frankfurt, 1624*



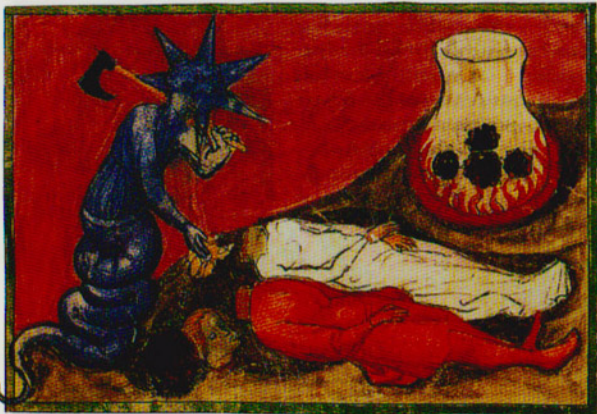
Solve et coagula,
dissolution and
bonding, or
mercury and
sulphur in the
image of eagle
and toad.

*D. Stolcius von
Stolckenberg,
Viridarium
chymicum,
Frankfurt, 1624*



Torment of the metals

A symbolic representation of the three different forms of calcination of the original material.



Aurora consurgens,
early 15th century

The fabulous winged being represents the initial pulverization, "philosophical renewal".

Torment of the metals

In Eleazar's interpretation, the dragon is prepared from the philosophers' vitriol and represents the dry path, while Saturn-Antimony represents the wet path. Finally, by achieving links to Mercurius, both lead to its fixing.

*Abraham Eleazar,
Uraltres chymisches
Werk, Leipzig, 1760*



Torment of the metals

"Take his soul and return it to him, for the corruption and destruction of the one thing is the birth of the other. This means: rob him of the destructive moisture and augment it with his natural moisture, which will be his completion and his life."

Aurora consurgens,
early 16th century

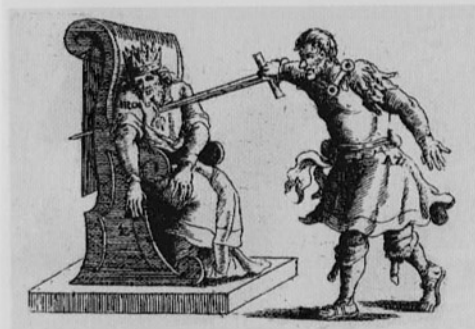


Torment of the metals

Son and servants
ask the king for
power over the
realm (oro, Latin:
I request;
ro: anagram of
French or: gold,
and Hebrew:
light).



The son (Azoth)
kills the father.



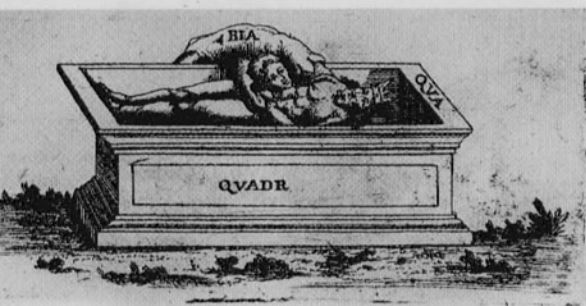
and collects his
blood.



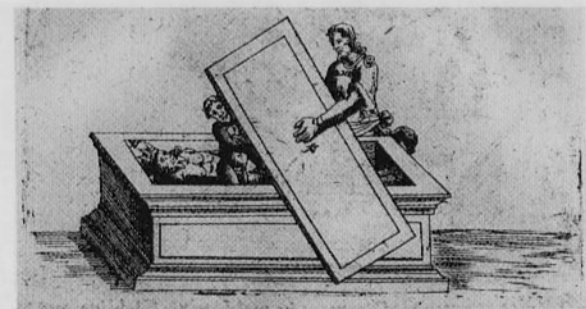
*Janus Lacinius,
Pretiosa Margarita,
Venice, 1546;
Leipzig edition,
1714*

Torment of the metals

The grave (furnace) is prepared.



"Both fall through
art into the grave."
(QUADR: four-
elemental.)

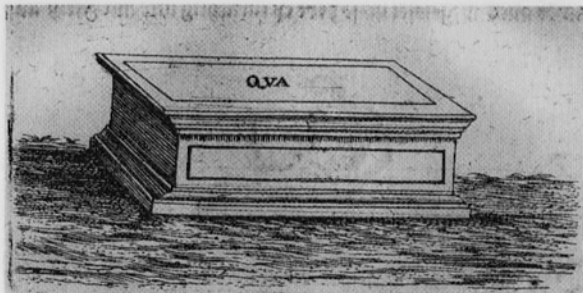


The son tries to
escape, but a third
comes, who has
sprung from both,
and holds him
back.

*J. Lacinius,
Pretiosa Margarita,
Leipzig, 1714*

Torment of the metals

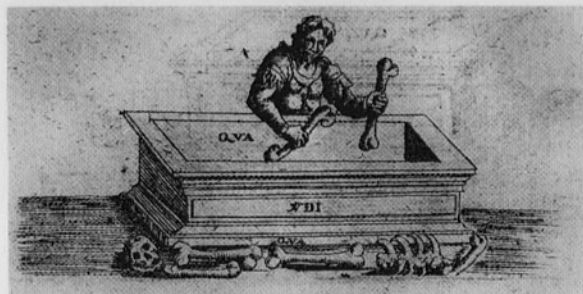
In the grave
"comes putrefaction in ashes or a
very warm bath".
(QUA: Aqua.)



After cooling
down, the result
of putrefaction
can be seen. (LAS:
anagram of Sal.)



The bones are
taken out



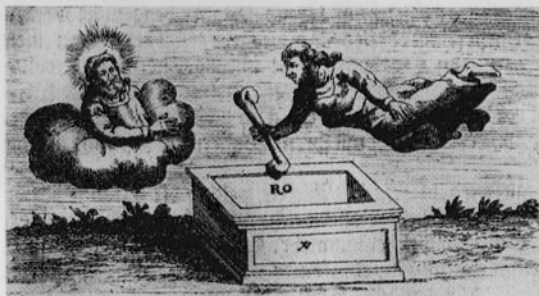
Torment of the metals



The dissolved matter is cooked until black, sprinkled with the water of life and once again cooked, until it is white. An angel comes and throws the bones (salt) onto the white earth, which is then cooked again.



The servants ask God for the return of the king.



Gradually the angels bring the rest of the bones, until the earth is completely fixed and red like a ruby. (Ro from Lat. 'ros': dew, sweat; Lat. 'rosa', the rose, a code name for tartar.)

*J. Lacinius,
Pretiosa Margarita,
Leipzig, 1714*

Torment of the metals

The king is now
entirely spiritual



and has the power
to turn all the ser-
vants into kings.
The son is missing.
He has conjoined
with the father.

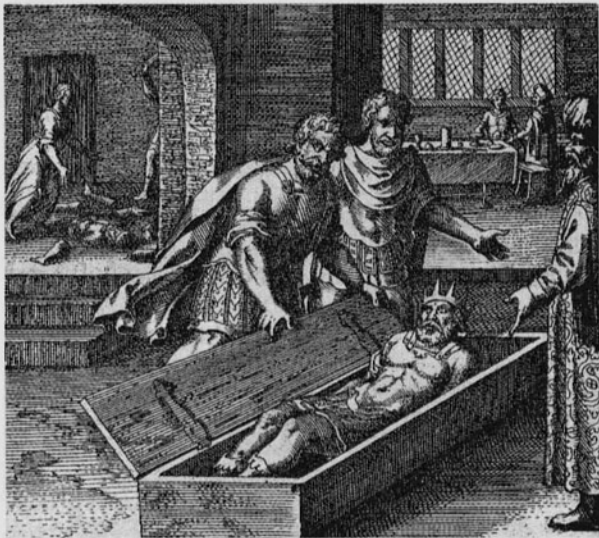
In this phase of
"projectio" (trans-
ference), the
dusty lapis is
added as an en-
zyme to the base
metals.



*Janus Lacinius,
Pretiosa Margarita,
Leipzig, 1714*

Torment of the metals

"Osiris is underhandedly murdered by Typhon (Seth), who afterwards scatters his limbs, but Isis gathers them up and puts them together to make a body. But the male member has broken off, lost in the water. For sulphur perishes, thus is sulphur born."



The absence of the king's male member after he is reassembled is a reference to the idea that the matter is now the unified material which the philosophers call "rebis" or "hermaphrodite".

Resurrection

The masonic lodge at the admission of a master:

A position of the Grand Master in the East

B Altar with Bible and hammer

G The old master-word on the coffin

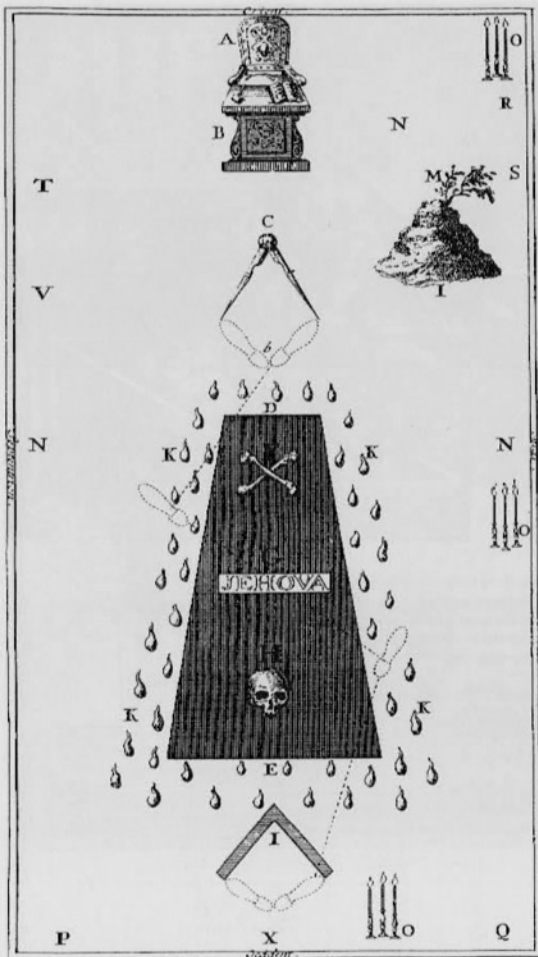
K Tears of grief over Hiram's death

LM The burial mound with the acacia branch

O The positions of the leading officials of the lodge.

X The new recruit in the West

L'ordre des Francs-Maçons trahi...
Amsterdam, 1745





The "mosaic floor" of black and white tiles refers to the bipolar nature of earthly existence: the chimera of light and darkness, agents and patients, form and matter. It leads to the holy of holies containing the eternal spirit-fire of Jehovah, which no mortal can see.

Work-table for the 3rd masonic degree (master), England, c. 1780

Resurrection

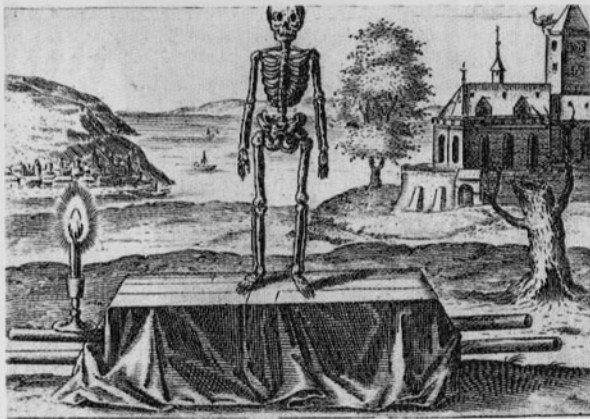
Sol and Luna still lie side by side as "two different things" in the glass coffin of the retort. After putrefaction they will be resurrected as "one thing from two" (Rebis).

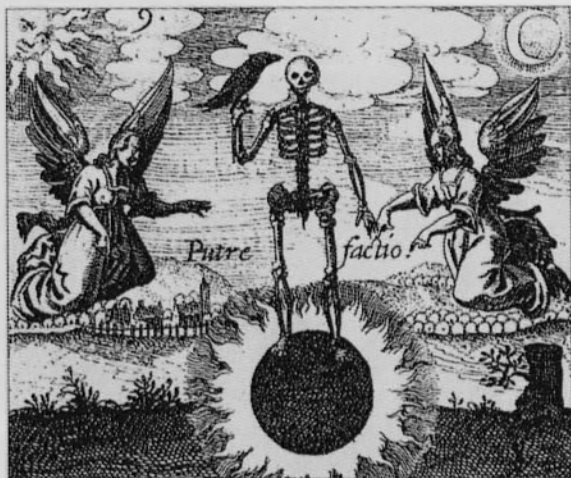
D. Stolcius von Stolzenberg, Viridarium chymicum, Frankfurt, 1624



Without death by burning (candle) no resurrection can occur, for in ashes lies the "salt of glory"

D. Stolcius von Stolzenberg, Viridarium chymicum, Frankfurt, 1624





The "dark material fire" of the black sun divides spirit and soul from the putrefied body.

D. Stolcius von Stolckenberg, Viridarium chymicum, Frankfurt, 1624



"Decay is a wonderful smith", who transfers one element to the other.

D. Stolcius von Stolckenberg, Viridarium chymicum, Frankfurt, 1624

The black sun is the outer sun, whose "dark, consuming fire" brings everything to decay. In Arabic alchemy, "the blackness or the shadow of the sun" is also a code name for the impurities of common gold, which must be washed away.

*S. Trismosin,
Splendor solis,
London,
16th century*



The inner sun as an image of the *lapis*, the red-winged lion.

S. Trismosin, Splendor solis, London, 16th century



Aurora

"(...) Thus the Dawn at the peak of reddening is the end of all darkness and the banishment of night, that wintry time that one will knock against if one wanders into it and does not take care."



"Turn to me with your whole heart and do not despise me because I am black and dark, for the sun has burned me so, and the black depths have covered my face."

Aurora consurgens, late 14th century



Runge planned the painting as part of a cycle on the four seasons as the "four dimensions of the created spirit". Morning represents "the boundless enlightenment of the universe".

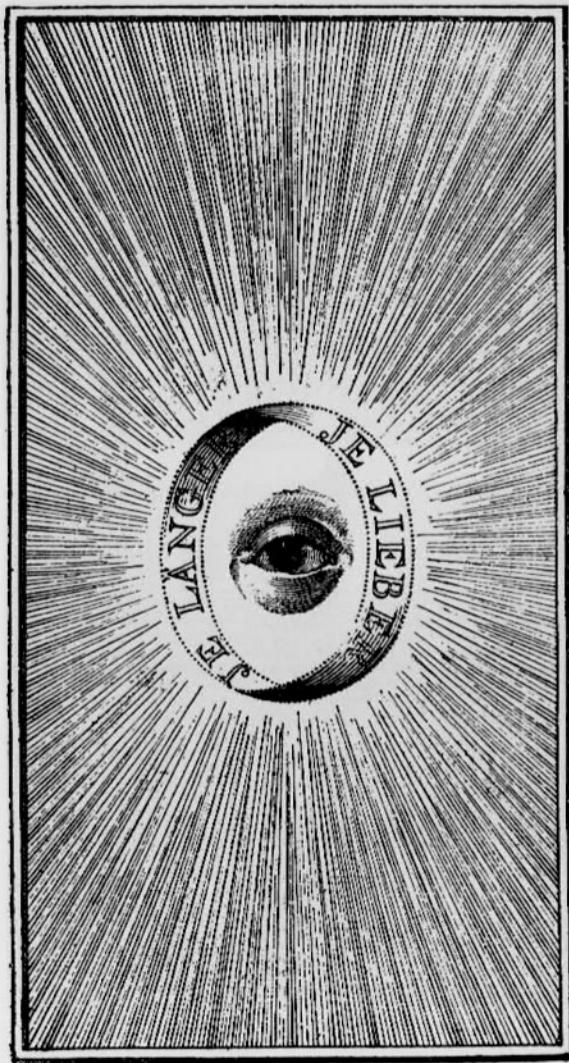
Lily and dawn symbolize the rise of the age of the Holy Spirit."

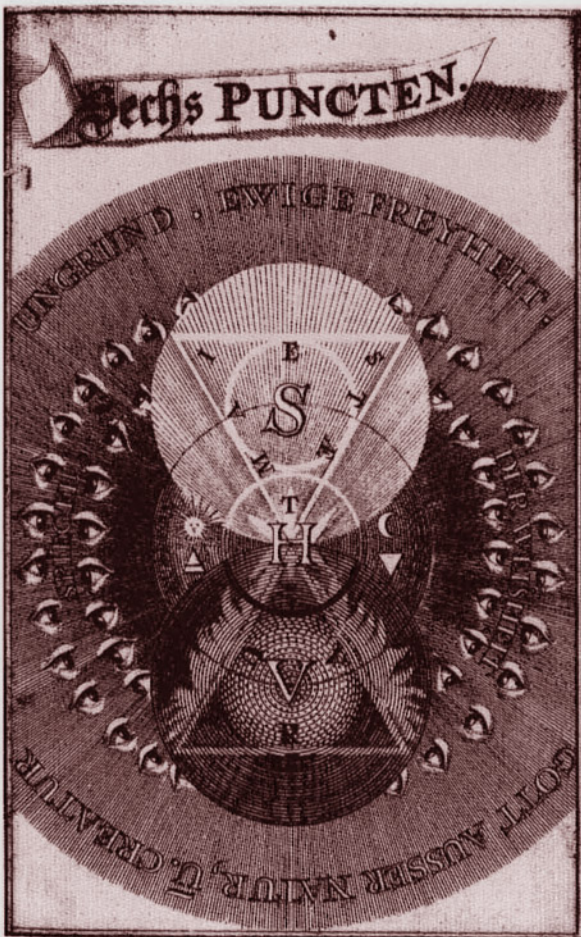
Ph. O. Runge, Der kleine Morgen, Hamburg, 1808



"Here, two eyes have once more become one (...). By its changing gaze all things are nourished (...). If this eye closed for a moment, nothing could exist any more. For this reason it is called opened eye, upper eye, sacred eye, surveying eye, an eye that sleeps not nor slumbers, an eye that is the guard of all things, the continuous existence of all things." (Zohar, Cologne edition, 1982)

Little flower garden of the Seraphim, from the works of Böhme, 18th century



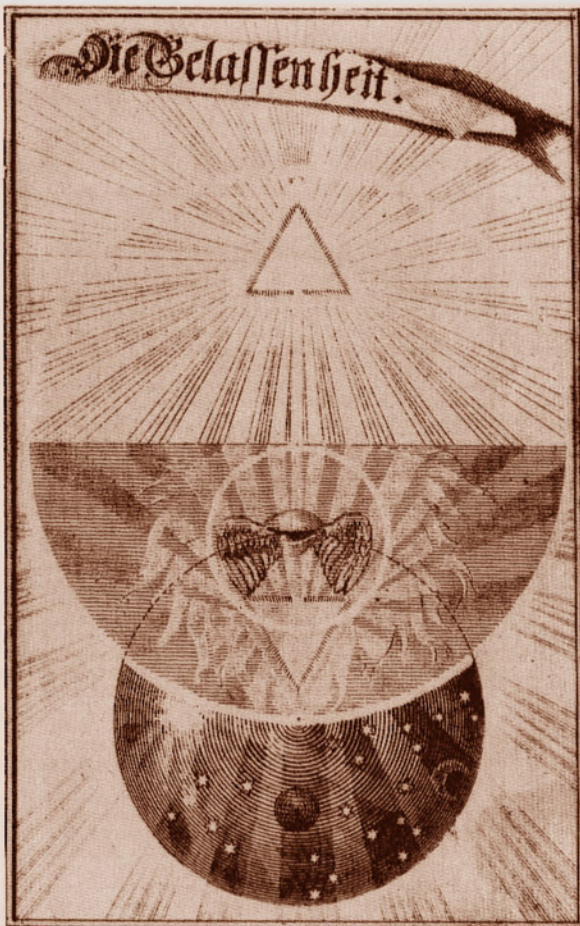


The dark background is the innermost hidden aspect of God. In a free translation of the Cabalistic *En-Sof* (the infinite), Böhme referred to him as the "un-ground". In the virgin mirror of wisdom, the divine will recognizes itself and "imagines from the unground in itself (...) and impregnates itself with imagination from wisdom (...) as a mother without childbirth"

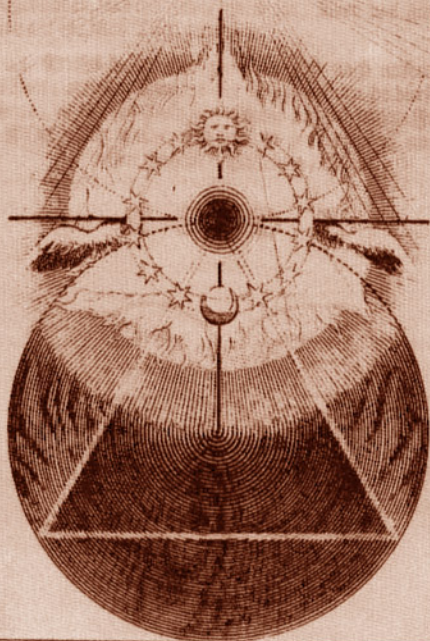
*Jacob Böhme,
Theosophische
Wercke, Amster-
dam, 1682*

"The soul is an eye of fire, or a mirror of fire, wherein the Godhead has revealed itself (...). It is a hungry fire, and must have being, otherwise it becomes a dark and hungry valley."

Jacob Böhme,
Theosophische
Wercke, Amster-
dam, 1682



40. Fragen von der Seele



"Thus we understand the soul; that it is an awakened life from God's eye; its primal state is in fire, and fire is its life.

*Jacob Böhme,
Theosophische
Wercke, Amster-
dam, 1682*

Light &
Darkness

D. A. Freher, in:
Works of
J. Behmen, Law
Edition, 1764

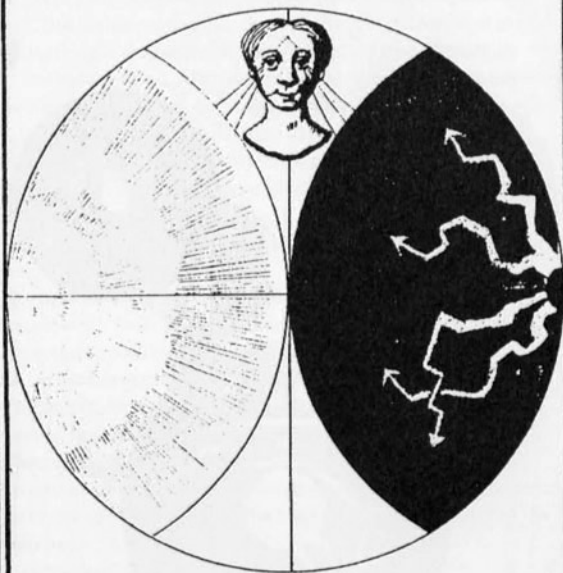


**Light &
Darkness**

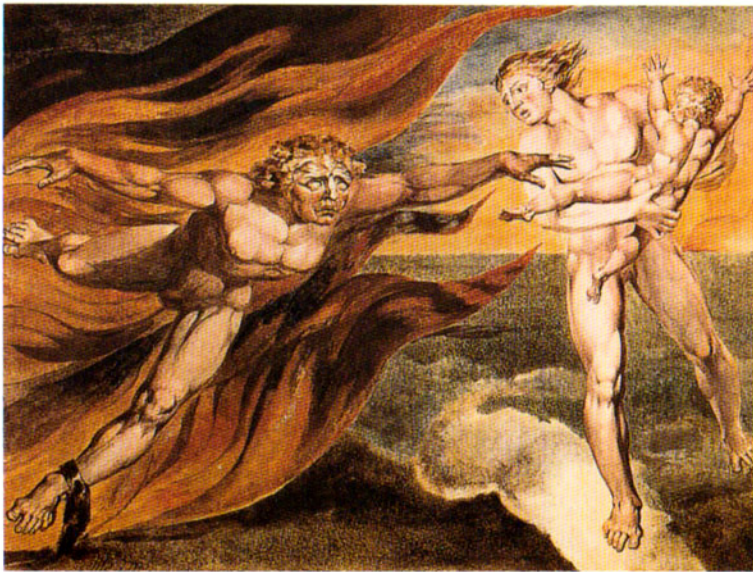
"We have the
Centrum Naturae
in ourselves; If we
make an angel out
of ourselves, that
is what we are; if
we make a devil
out of ourselves,
that too is what
we are; we are all
at work, creating,
we are standing in
the field."
(J. Böhme)

D. A. Freher, *Para-
doxa Emblemata*,
Manuscript, 18th
century

*This One is capable both of ¹²¹~
this and of that.*



*Choose, and what thou chooseth
shall be thine*



In 1790, as an advocate of revolutionary ideals of freedom, and an opponent of all moral and state supervision, the painter and poet William Blake wrote *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, a spirited polemic against the traditional identification of good and evil as soul and body. "But the following (...) are true: (...) Man has no body distinct from his soul, for that called body is a portion of soul discerned by the five senses (...). Energy is the only life and is from the body; and reason is the (...) outward circumference of energy".

The illustration refers to a vision of Böhme, in which heaven and hell are within one another, "and yet neither is apparent to the other".

The divine, fertile angels "are in the gentle water's matrix", and the hellish and infertile "are enclosed in the hard fire of anger". (Böhme)

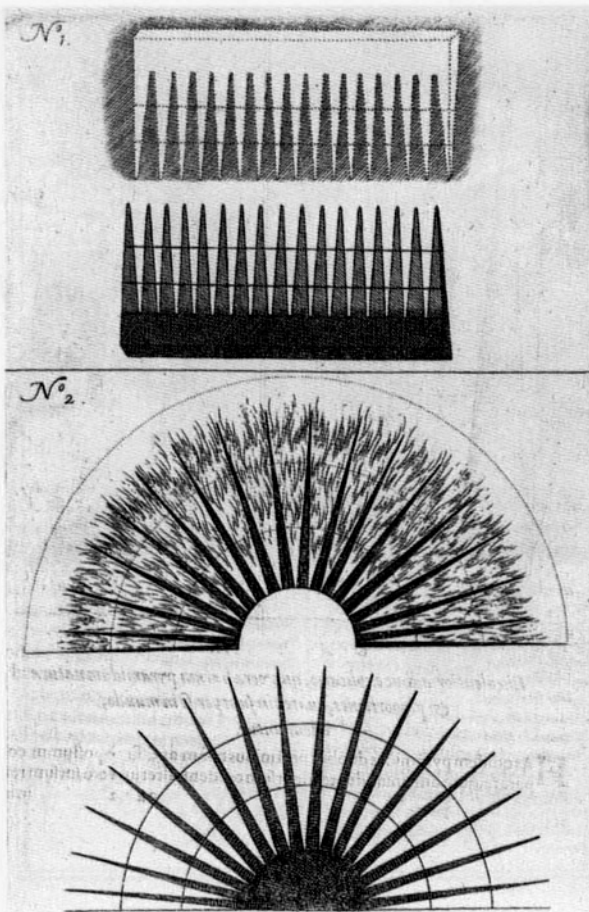
William Blake, *The good and evil angels*,
c. 1793-1794

Light & Darkness

No. 1. Form and matter, spiritual and physical principle as a light and dark comb.

No. 2. The combs can be depicted as two hemispheres, "the upper one corresponding to the male, generative nature, and the other to the female, receptive to the seed of light."

Robert Fludd,
Utriusque Cosmi,
Oppenheim, 1619

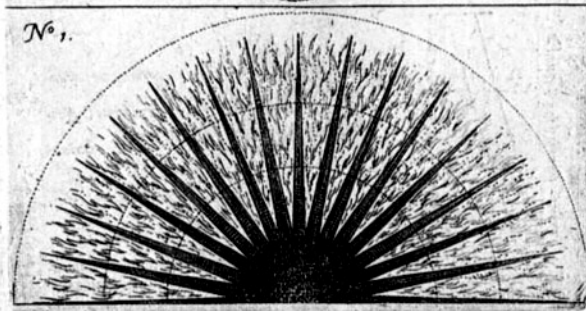
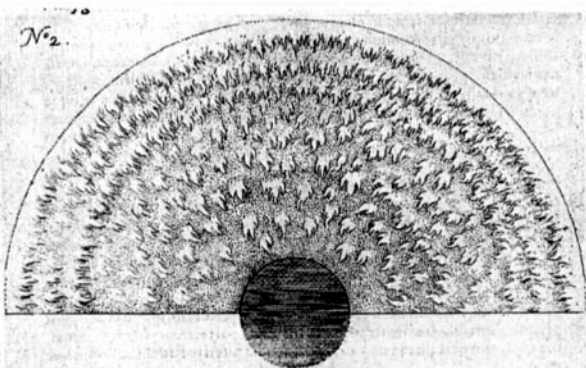


Light & Darkness

The great sex act
of heaven and
earth.

The divine sperm-
atic influx is the
famous dew of the
alchemists, which
should only be
collected on
spring nights,
when the sky is
completely clear
and the tempera-
ture is mild.

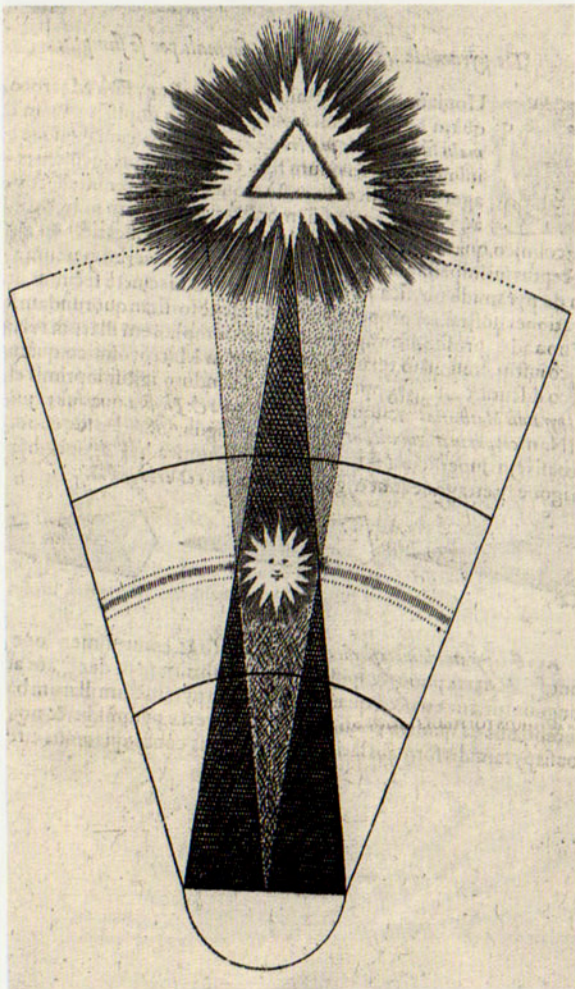
*Robert Fludd,
Utriusque Cosmi,
Oppenheim, 1619*



Light & Darkness

The upper third is the region of the divine, fiery heaven (Empyran), the lower of the elemental heaven. The central sphere, which consists of equal parts of upper light and lower matter, Fludd assigned to the ether, the "fiery air". The path of the sun runs straight through the intersections, "which Platonists therefore referred to as the sphere of the soul (sol)."

Robert Fludd,
Utriusque Cosmi,
Oppenheim, 1619



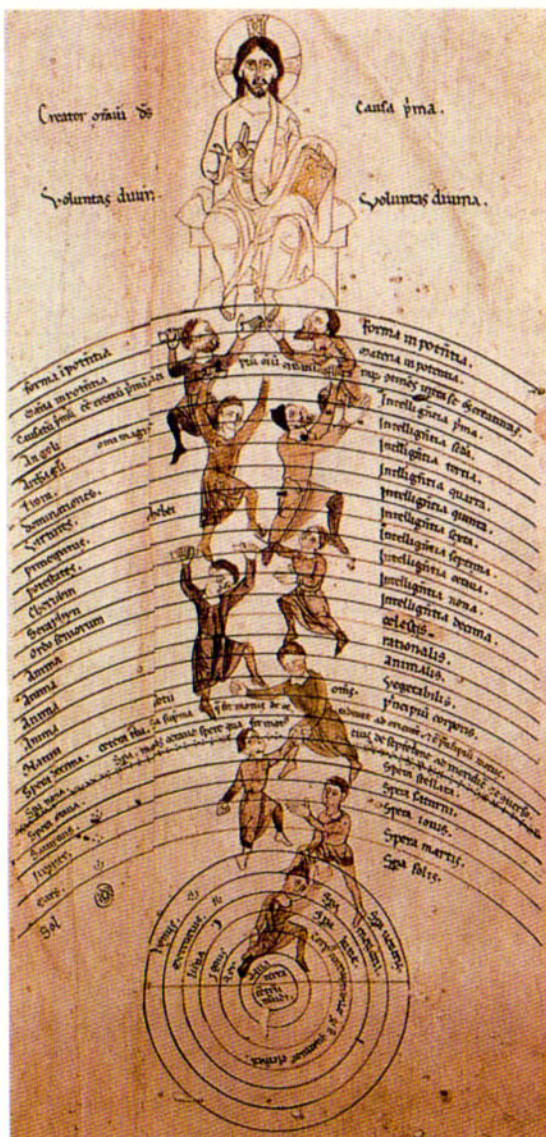
The TREE of the SOUL.

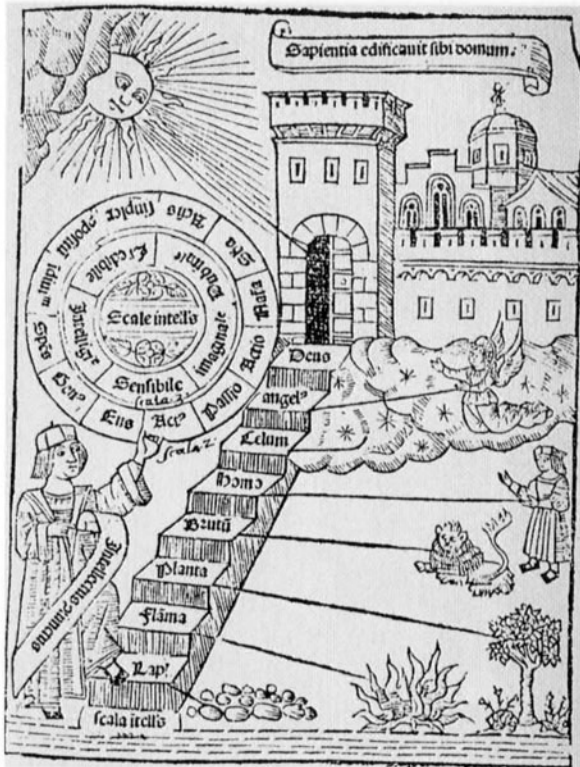


The tree of the soul is rooted in the dark world of divine anger, and grows in two directions: to the right is self-will, to the left is selflessness, illuminated by the light of the holy spirit. This trunk alone leads upwards through the four Cabalistic worlds or layers of the soul.

*D. A. Freher, in:
Works of
J. Behmen, Law
Edition, 1764*

Manuscript, 12th
century





Here, the intellect stands at the foot of the ladder of creation, which leads upwards from the mineral realm via the levels of plant, animal, man and angel up to God, where Sophia, wisdom, has built her house. The figure symbolizing the intellect holds the instrument that is to enable him to climb up and down, a disc of the *ars generalis* of the Catalan philosopher and Christian mystic Ramon Lull (1235–1316).

Ramon Lull, De nova logica, 1512

Ladder

The ascent into the mysteries of Freemasonry is based on the three "Great Lights": Bible, compass and square. The Jacob's Ladder represents the process that is supposed to transform the raw stone (apprentice, *Prima Materia*) into the cubic stone (*lapis*).

The female figures: Faith, Hope and Charity. The columns: Strength (S), Wisdom (W) and Beauty (B).

J. Bowring, *First Degree Board*, 1819





While the ascent on the apprentice board leads straight up a ladder – as an expression of the original will, following a projection – at the more advanced level of the journeyman, what we now have is a curved path in the form of a seven-step staircase, in which it is no longer clear where the beginning and end are.

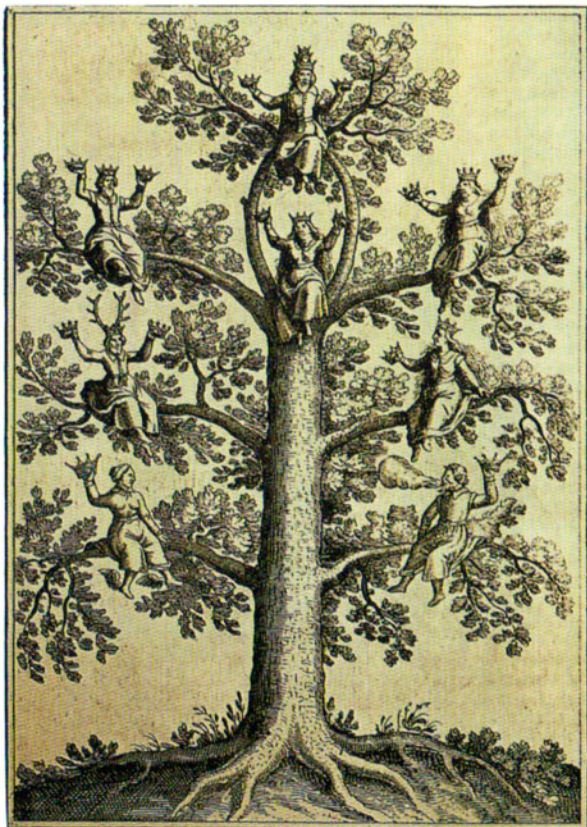
J. Bowring, Second Degree Board, 1819

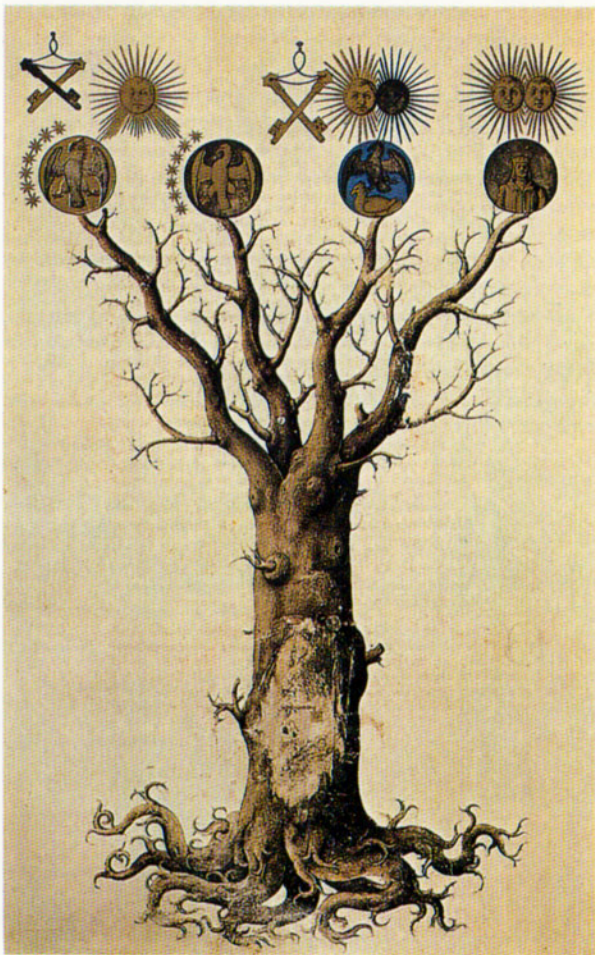
Philosophical tree

This depiction of the *Opus Magnum* is indebted to the construction of the Sephiroth tree.

The dissolving and binding powers sit opposite one another on the branches.

*J. D. Mylius,
Anatomia auri,
Frankfurt, 1628*

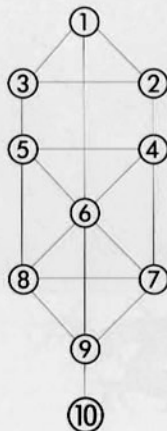




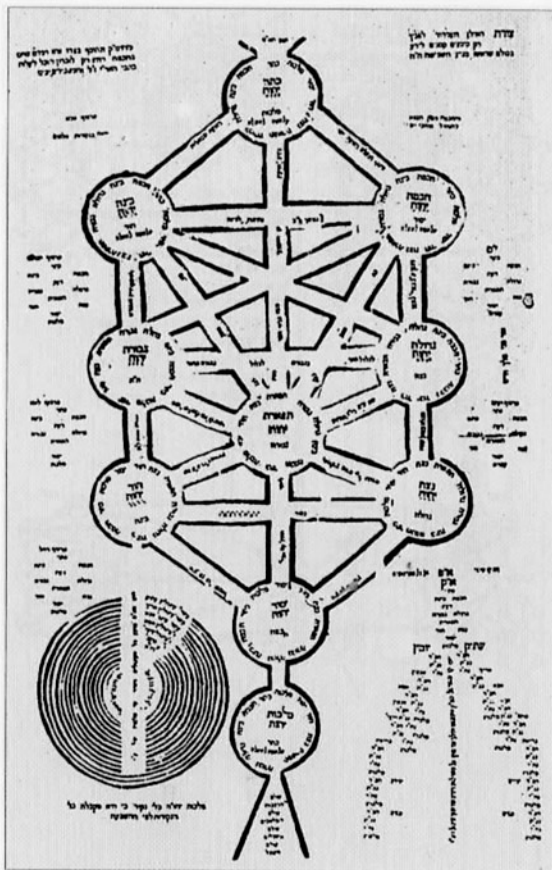
The Alexander novel, popular in the Middle Ages, tells of the oracular trees of the sun and moon. Observations of the appearance of tree-like crystallizations in the retort must also have contributed to the dissemination of this symbolism.

*Pseudo-Lull,
Alchemical Treatise, c. 1470*

The Sephiroth tree is at the core of the Cabala, its most influential and multi-layered symbol. The Sephiroth are the ten, primal numbers which, in combination with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, represent the plan of creation of all upper and lower things. They are the ten names, attributes or powers of God, and form a pulsating organism called the "mystical face of God" or the "body of the universe". It stands on the three pillars of mercy (right), severity (left) and central balance. The central pillar forms the spine through which the divine dew flows down into the lower womb. In Creation only the effects of the seven lower Sephiroth are visible, the upper triad works outside time and beyond understanding. In the system of the four worlds it corresponds to the divine light-world (aziluth), which is separated by a veil from the two lower triads of the throne-world (beriah) and the world of angels (yezirah). The lowest Sephira, Malchut, is identified with Assia, the spiritual prototype of the material world.



1 Kether	supreme crown, initial will
2 Chochma	wisdom, seed of all things
3 Bina	intelligence, upper matrix
4 Chessed	love, mercy, goodness
5 Gebura	severity, punitive power
6 Tiphereth	generosity, splendour, beauty
7 Nezach	constant endurance, victory
8 Hod	magnificence, majesty
9 Jesod	ground of all procreative powers
10 Malkuth	kingdom, the dwelling of God in creation



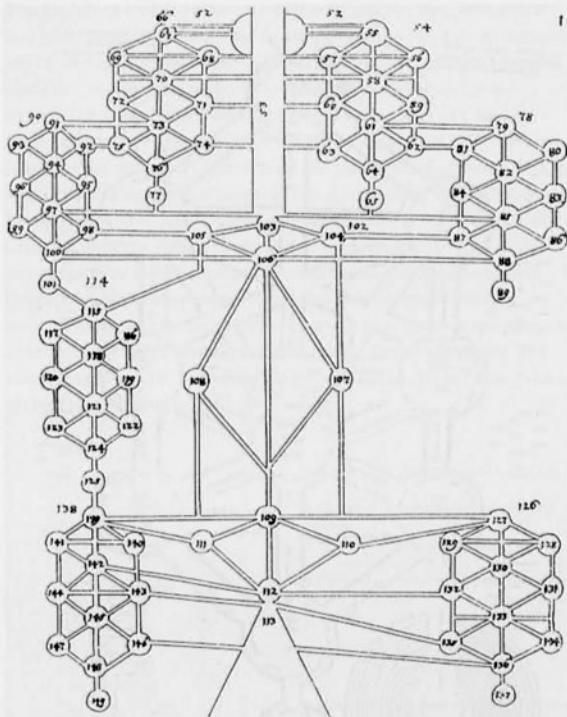
According to one doctrine of the Zohar, evil arose from an eruption of the Sephira of "severity" (5), when it was separated by a blockage of the intermediary channel from the mitigating influence of divine love (4). For the mystic Isaak Luria, this was caused by a cosmic fracture and by the fall of the lower Sephiroth, unable to bear the penetration of the upper stream of light in primal times.

*Sephiroth tree after
Isaak Luria,
Amsterdam, 1708*

Philosophical tree

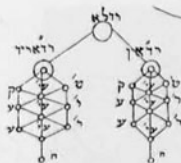
The honeycomb-like links depicted here represent new formations and restructurings of the tree after the fracture of the lower Sephiroth. Luria called the configurations "Parzufim", faces of the deity.

C. Knorr von Rosenroth, *Kabbala denudata*, Sulzbach, 1684

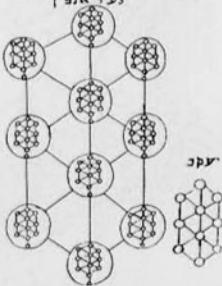
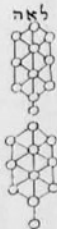
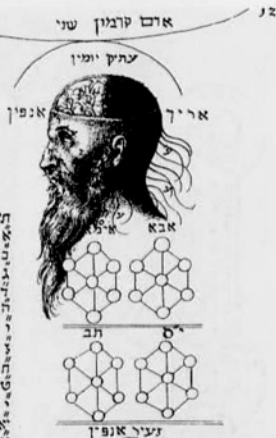


The ten Sephiroth not only form the cosmic body of the first man, Adam Kadmon, with the three upper brain-chambers and the seven limbs, but, according to the teaching of Isaak Luria, the individual Sephiroth are also reflections of his mystical face, each stressing a particular aspect.

C. Knorr von
Rosenroth, Kabbala
denudata,
Sulzbach, 1684



יג תקוני דיקנא של אין ואריך
 תקוני שלאן במיכה : תקני של אריך שמות
 א מ אל כמך
 ב נושא עון
 ג ועל על פשע
 ד לשארת נחלתו
 ה לא החזיק לדאפו
 ו כי מפץ חסד הוא
 ז ישוב ירחמו
 ח יבוש עונותינו
 ט ותשליך בעצמות ים וכו'
 י תתן אמת ליעקוב
 יא חסד לאברהם
 יב אשר נשבעת
 יג מימי קדם



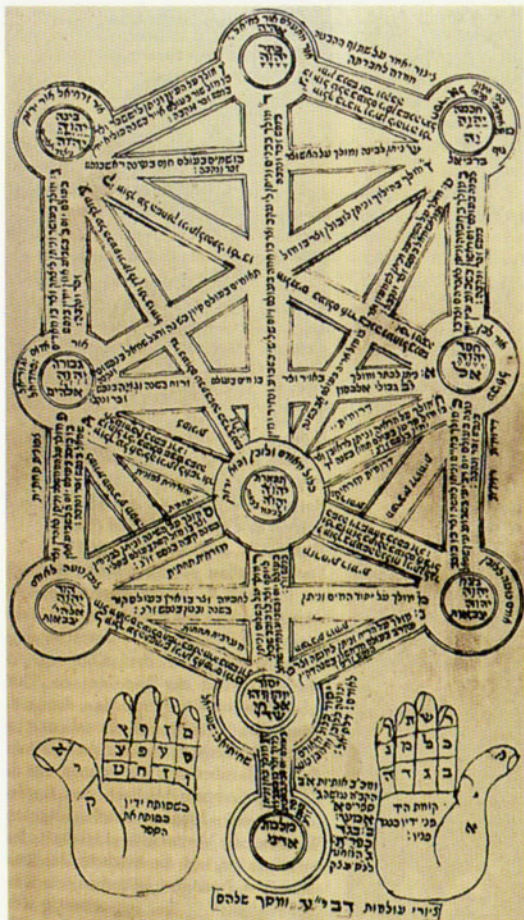
ה'ל' פות

כר - אה

Philosophical tree

According to the law of the Pythagorean Tetractys, the four seeds of the arcane name of God unfold on ten levels.

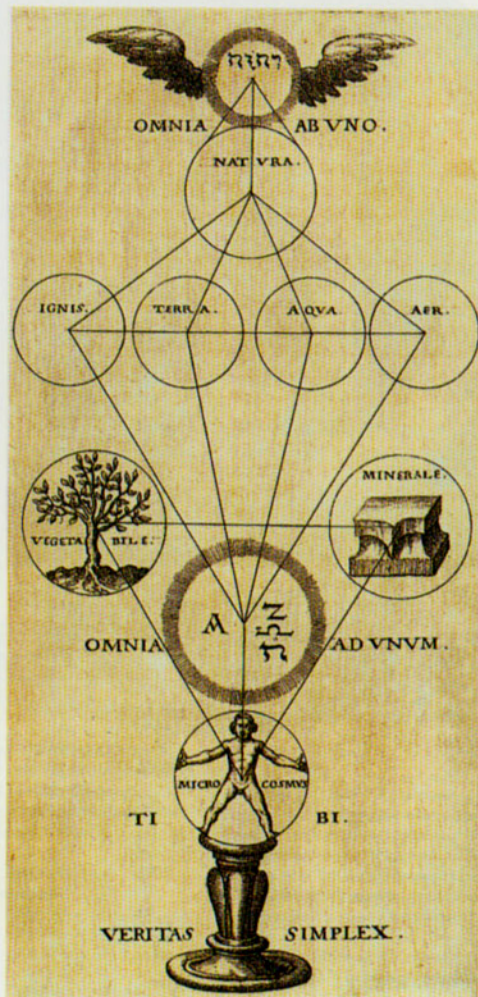
*Manuscript,
Salonica*



Philosophical tree

The "Tree of Pan-sophia" was the name that the Rosicrucian Daniel Mögling from Constance (alias Theophilus Schweighart) gave to his diagram, in which the harmonic connection of microcosm and macrocosm is to be contemplated.

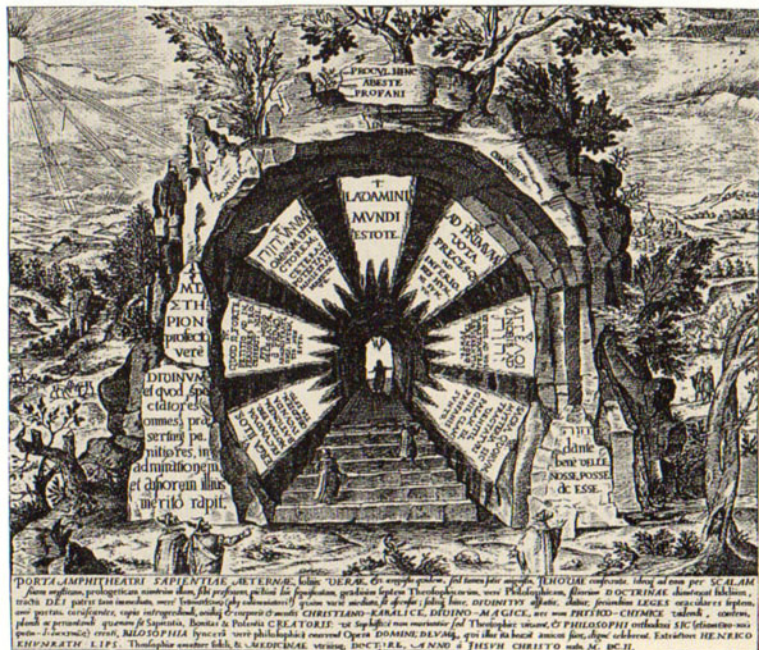
Theophilus Schweighart, Speculum sophericum Rhodostauroticum, 1604





Heinrich Khunrath's "Whole circle-round (...) stage of eternal wisdom" is filled with the spiritual salt of wisdom, the "Tartarus Mundi" or "central salt-point of the great building of the whole world" into which all the spatial lines of Hans Vredeman de Vries' perspectival construction vanish.

Heinrich Khunrath, Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae, 1602



Like bees attracted by the scent of the rose, the lovers of Theo-Sophia stream by from all directions to climb the seven steps of the "mystic ladder," through "the gate of eternal wisdom".

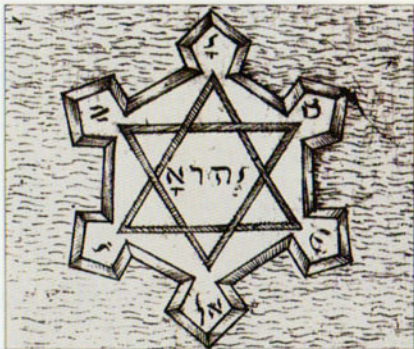
Heinrich Khunrath, *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae*, 1602

Mandala

Inscription above the emblem: "God is the fortress of all who believe in him"

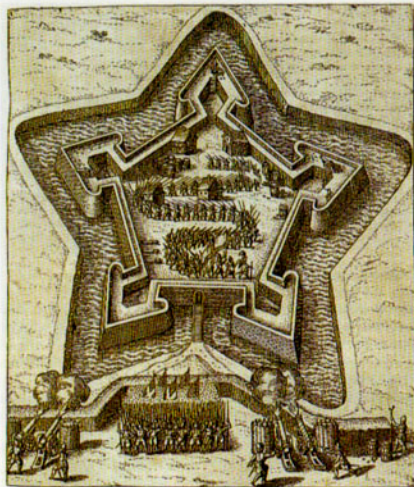
Inscription beneath the emblem: "We trust in God when the flood begins"

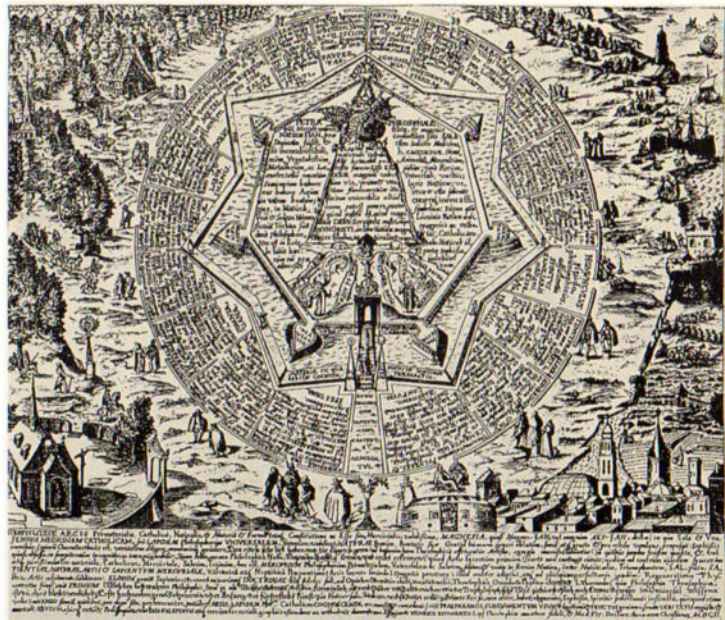
M.J. Ebermeier, *Sinnbilder von der Hoffnung*, Tübingen, 1653



On the art of warfare and the planning of fortifications.

Robert Fludd, *Utriusque Cosmi*, Vol. II, Oppenheim, 1619





Twenty-one paths lead to the alchemistic fortress but only on one, the enthusiastic path of the fear of God and of prayer, can it be entered. This path alone brings the knowledge of the correct source material. The seven corner-points of the fortress are the seven phases which lead to the central

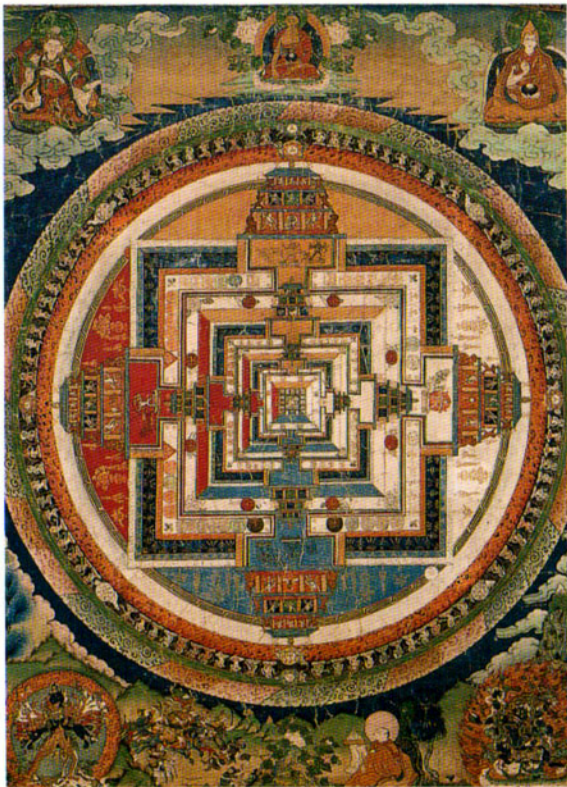
rock of the *lapis*. Here is the throne of "our Mercury", the dragon, "who marries himself and impregnates himself."

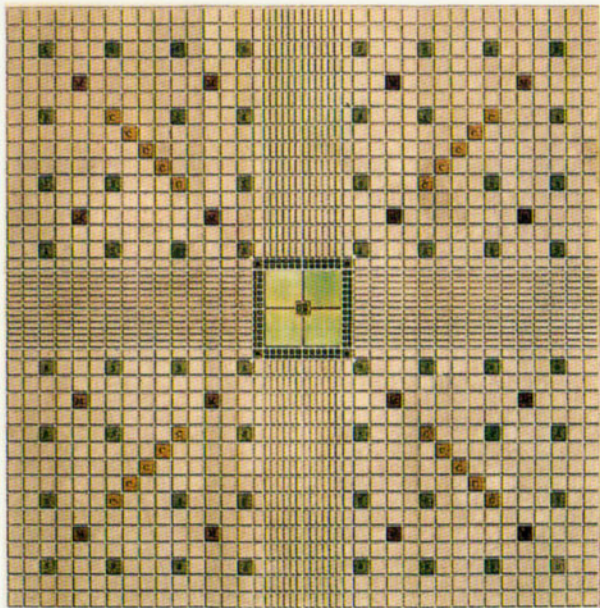
Heinrich Khunrath, *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae*. 1602

Mandala

This Tibetan mandala palace is divided, analogous to man as the divine measure of all things, into the three levels of body, language and spirit, to which, in this *Mandala of the Time-Wheel*, precisely 722 Tibetan deities are assigned.

Kalachakra Mandala, gouache, Tibet, 18th century





As in Blake's poems, in the writings of his contemporary, Richard Brothers, democratic convictions mingle with Biblical tradition and the author's own visionary experience. He identified the fallen Jerusalem with the London of his own time. Brothers based his detailed map of the city on the descriptions of the prophet Ezekiel.

*Engraving by Wilson Lowry, in:
R. Brothers, A Description of Jerusalem,
1801*

Dew

"Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew (...)" (Deuteronomy 33: 13)

"Our dew, our matter, is celestial, spermatic, dewish, electric, virginal, universal." (From the writing of Count Marsciano, 1744)

De alchimia,
Leyden, 1526

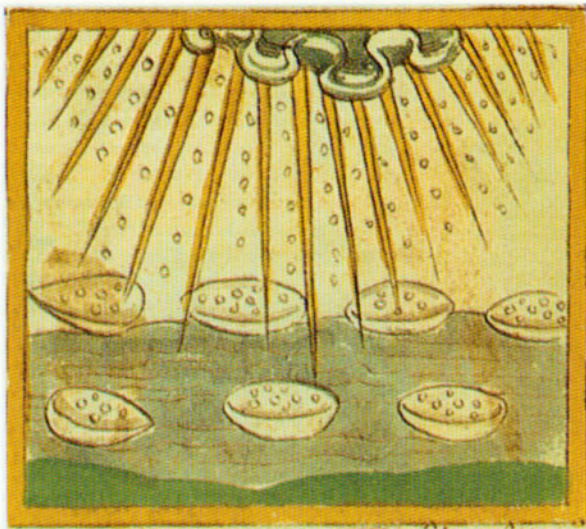


Plate 4

From the *Mutus Liber* (mute book), published in La Rochelle in 1677. The alchemical work was here depicted in a series of 15 plates. The alchemical couple as the lower correspondence to the sun and moon in the harvesting of the dew, which must occur in the months of April (Aries) and May (Taurus).



Plate 6

The result of the forty-day digestion and a second distillation is the appearance of a fixed sulphurous blossom called the "philosophers' gold".



Plate 7

The result of the distillations is conjoined with the extract that has been concentrated by the secret, lunar fire. At the bottom, Antimony-Saturn devours the child or the "philosophers' sulphur". After being purified, it is brought to whitening (Diana).



Plate 11

The philosophical Mercury now appears elevated to purple redness.



Plate 12

Filled with inner dynamism, the sulphur-bull bucks and the dew in the bowls vibrates, sated with the nitric heavenly spirit, pure salt-petre.



Plate 13

The sulphurous blossom has turned into a small sun, which has the power to take the philosophical Mercury to its highest stage of consistency.



Plate 15

The alchemical couple celebrate the coming of the dawn. The pagan Hercules has completed the deeds of the Work, and remains as a physical residue on the floor, while, thanks to the dew (the roses), his incorruptible spirit body rises into the air.



Serpent

"Sow the gold in the white, foliate earth which is the third earth that serves the gold, it tinges the elixir and the elixir tinges it in turn."

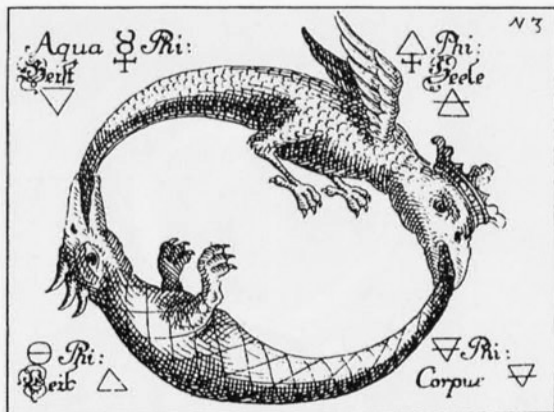


Aurora consurgens,
early 16th century



Sourdough is a favourite image of the ferment used in the process to raise the matter.

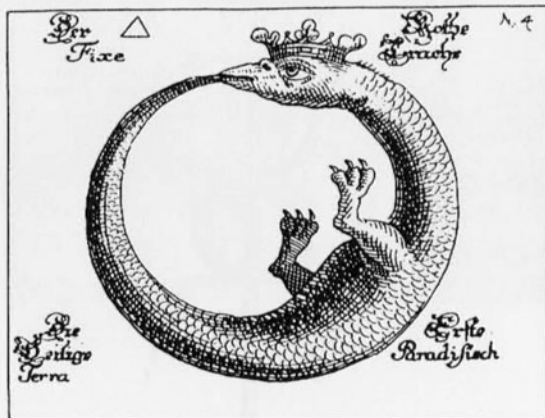
Aurora consurgens, late 14th century



"The supreme serpent (No. 3) is the cosmic spirit which brings everything to life, which also kills everything and takes all the figures of nature. To summarize: he is everything, and also nothing."

It is called *Ouroboros*. In Coptic *Ouro* means king, and in Hebrew *ob* means a serpent.

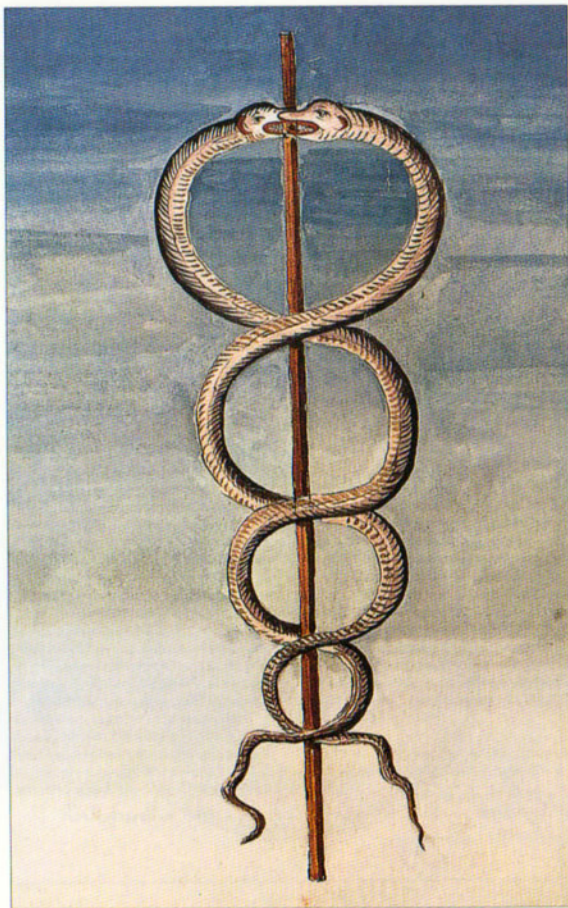
Abraham Eleazar,
Donum Dei, Erfurt,
1735



Serpent

"These are the two snakes fastened around Mercury's staff, with which he demonstrates his great power and changes into whichever forms he wishes (...)."

*Livre des figures
hieroglyphiques,
Paris, 17th century*



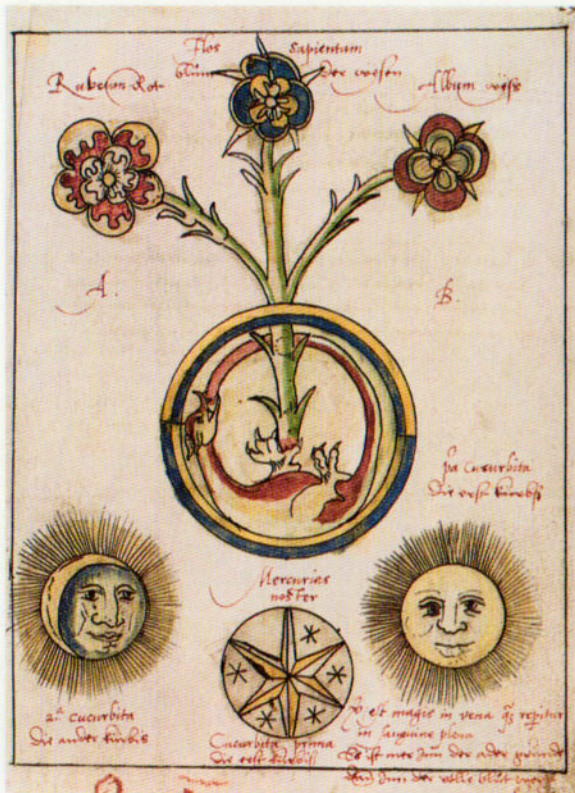


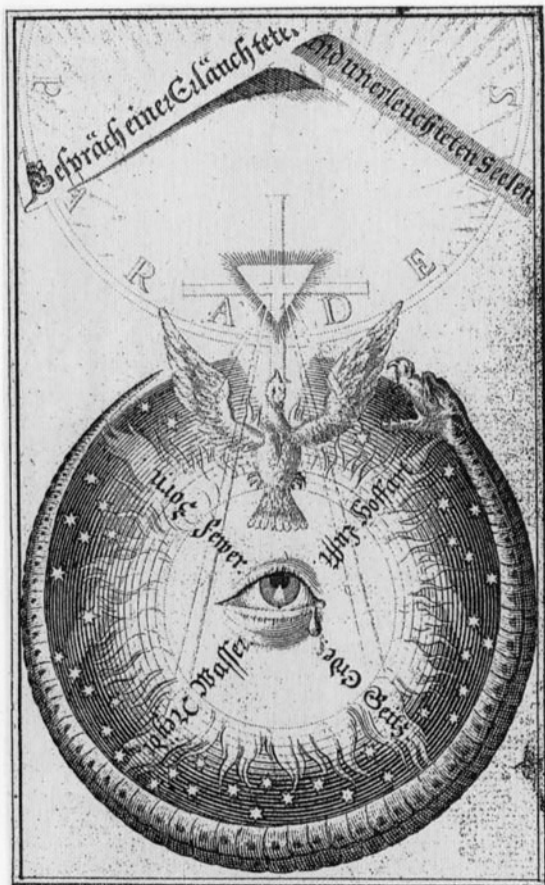
Allegory of the marriage of the dual principles in the work: on the left the female, mercurial side with the pelican as a symbolic animal, and on the right, the male, sulphur side with the fire-bird, the Phoenix.

*Figurarum
Aegyptiorum
Secretarum,
18th century*

The "Mercurial tail-eater" is "our subject". "From this one root will sprout roses, the supreme good." The white rose signifies the lunar "Philosophical Tincture", the red rose the solar "Metallic Tincture". The mysterious "blue rose" in the middle is called the "flower of wisdom".

Hieronymus Reussner, Pandora, Basle, 1588





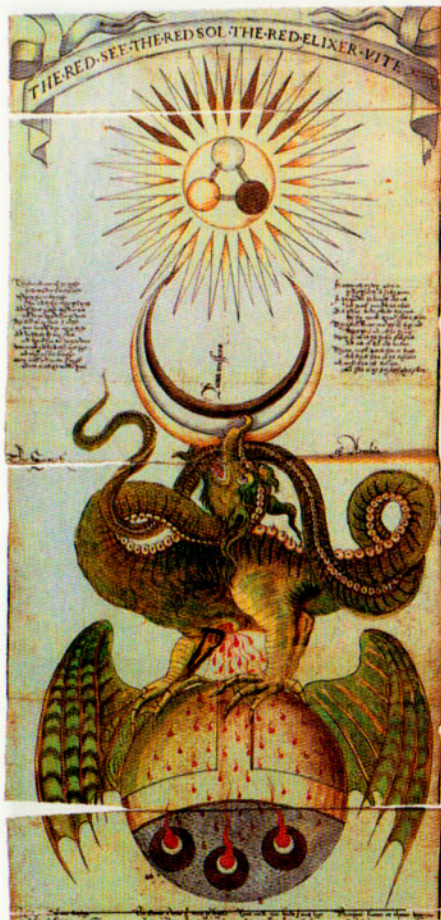
Since Vulcan lit the mercurial wheel of anguish into which the soul had imagined itself, "its meaning only stands after the multiplicity of natural things". It is entirely subject to the changeable play of the passions.

The illuminated soul counsels the poor soul to break the bonds of the monstrous snake-husk by introducing it to Christ.

*Jacob Böhme,
Theosophische
Wercke,
Amsterdam, 1682*

The "Red Sea" in the caption above this detail from the Ripley Scroll was a well-known code name for the divine mercurial water and its tincturing power.

Ripley Scroll,
manuscript,
16th century





Joel 2, 13: "Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord, your God."

The fiery soul has entered a false shelter with fire, and must break out again with fire and violence, or the diabolical serpent or the astral world spirit will keep it in its prison.

J. Böhme, Weg zu Christo, 1730 edition

Conjunctio

"Our Mercurial dragon" can only be conquered by Sol and Luna together, that is, in order to kill him one must remove his sulphur and lunar moisture at the same time.

Aurora consurgens,
early 16th century



"It is said: Woman dissolves man, and he makes her solid. That is: The spirit dissolves the body and makes it soft, and the body fixes the spirit."

"Senior says: I am a hot and dry Sol and you Luna are cold and moist. When we couple and come together (...) I will with flattery take your soul from you". (*Aurora consurgens*)

Aurora consurgens, early 16th century



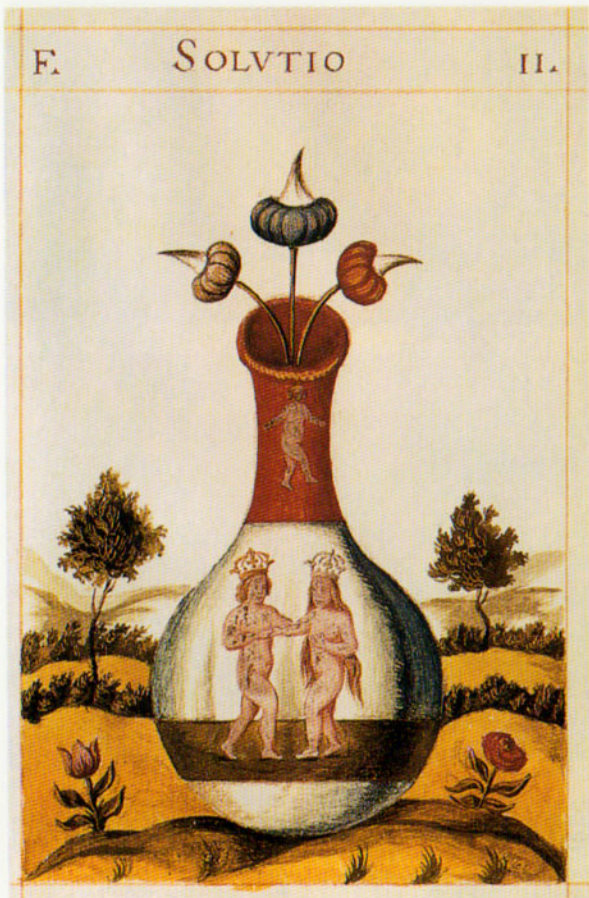
The king, Gabri-
cius, and his sister,
Beya, want to em-
brace "to conceive
a son whose like is
unknown to the
world".

J. D. Mylius,
Anatomia auri,
Frankfurt, 1628

Conjunctio

The royal pair seeks to unite to give birth to a son, a king "his head red, his eyes black, his feet white: this is mastery".

Donum Dei,
17th century



F. SOLVTIO PERFECTA III.



"Return the nature of the four elements, and soon you will find what you seek, but to return nature means making corpses into spirits in our mastery."

*Donum Dei,
17th century*

Conjunctio

FERMENTATION



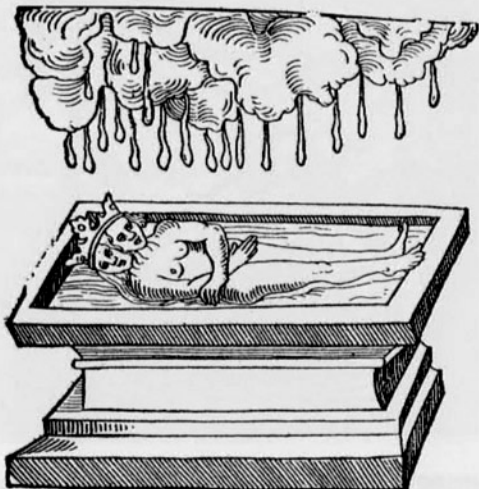
"But here Sol is enclosed and poured over with 'Mercurio philosophorum'."

Rosarium philosophorum, 1550

MULTIPLICATION

"Here, the water
sinks/

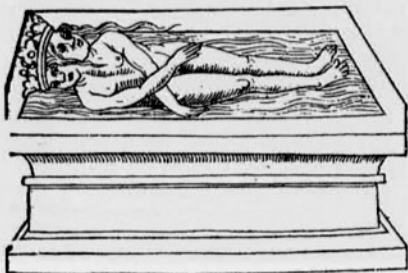
And gives the
earth its water to
drink again."



REVIVAL

"Here the soul
comes from the
sky, fine and clear.

And resurrects the
philosopher's
daughter."



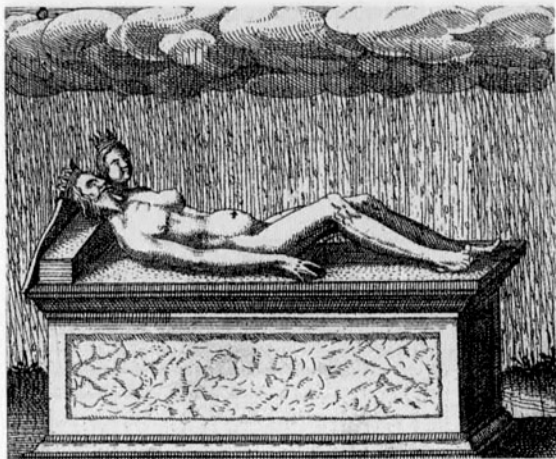
*All illustrations:
Rosarium
philosophorum,
1550*

Androgyny

After purification by fire and the dissolution of their bodies in the mercurial bath, the royal brother and sister are united. The ravens indicate the stage of putrefaction.



The pair arise as a rebis from the grave of putrefaction, and are cleaned of their blackness by the dew of heaven.





Philosophical gold and silver appear on the faces of the rebis. The presence of the two winged creatures indicates the final processes of sublimation.



The pelican, feeding its young with its blood, symbolizes the final phase of the Multiplicatio.

*All illustrations:
D. Stolcius von
Stolckenberg, Viri-
darium chymicum,
Frankfurt, 1624*

Androgyny

"The hermaphrodite, lying in the dark like a corpse, needs fire."

The philosophers call the cold and moist matter, woman (moon), the hot and dry, man (sun). The androgynous being is all four qualities at once.

*Michael Maier,
Atalanta fugiens,
Oppenheim, 1618*





Androgyny

Here, the south wind a symbol of the totality of sublimations is represented as a large eagle, gradually uniting the two opposites. The three legs on which the androgynous being stands, refer to the three-footed stand on which the retort is exposed to the fire.

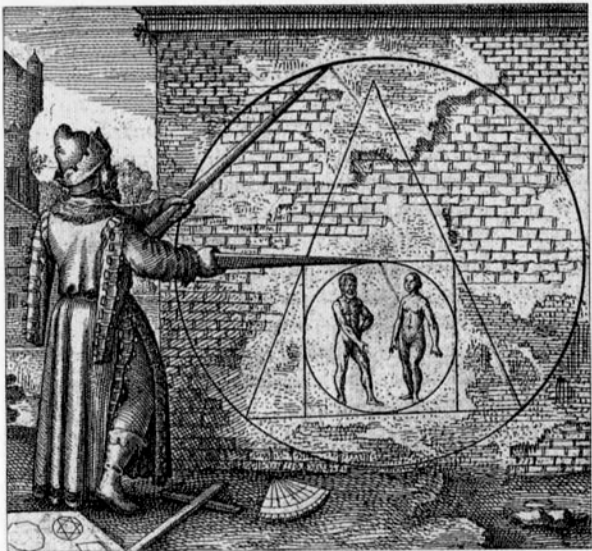
Aurora consurgens,
Early 16th century





This androgynous being is the spectral, immodest nature from "Lucifer Anti-Christ and his mother: one body and soul, fixed and volatile. Herein consist the natural arts of this world"

*Buch der Heiligen
Dreifaltigkeit,
15th century*

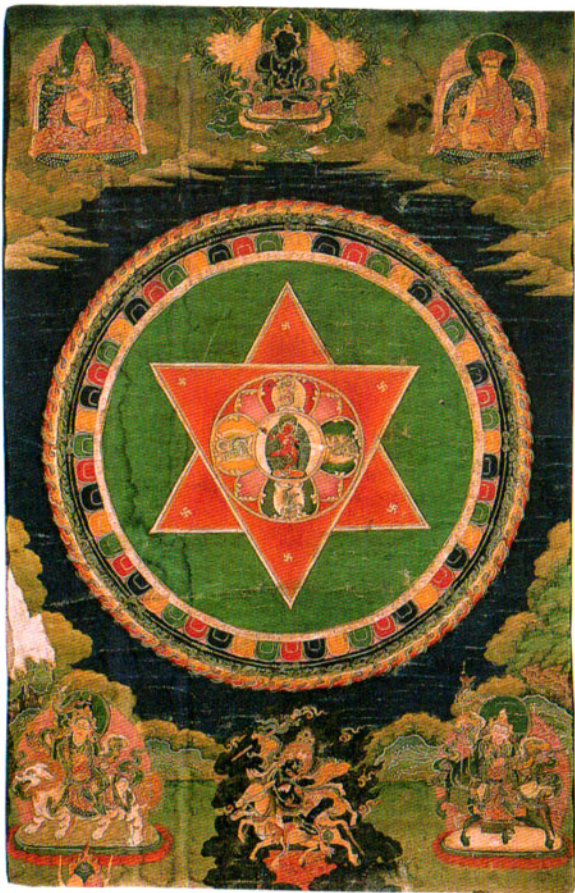


"Make of man and woman a circle, from that a square, then a triangle, then another circle, and you will have the philosophers' stone."

Michael Maier, Atalanta fugiens, Oppenheim, 1618

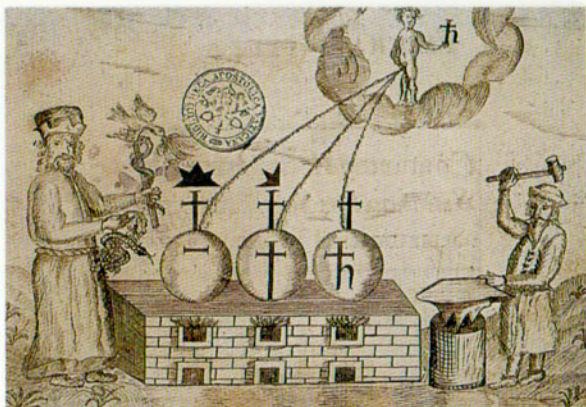
According to Tantric doctrine, the final truth consists in the complete interpenetration of Shiva and Shakti, of male and female energy. Shiva, the upward-pointing triangle, represents the static aspect of the supreme reality; Shakti, the downward-pointing triangle, represents the kinetic energy of the objective universe.

*Vajravarahi
Mandala, Tibet,
19th century*

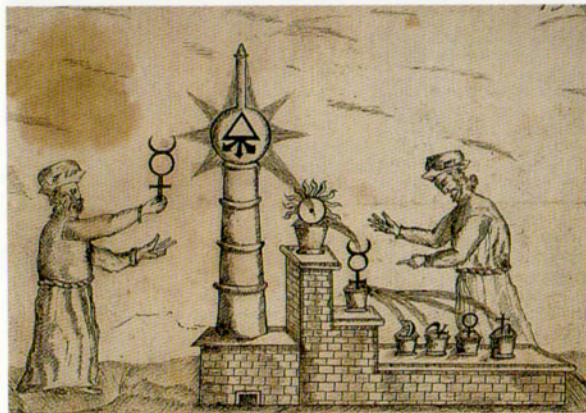


Androgyny

In the first Work the saturnine source material is sublimated thrice by being moistened with the 'boy's urine', a well-known code name for the mercurial water.

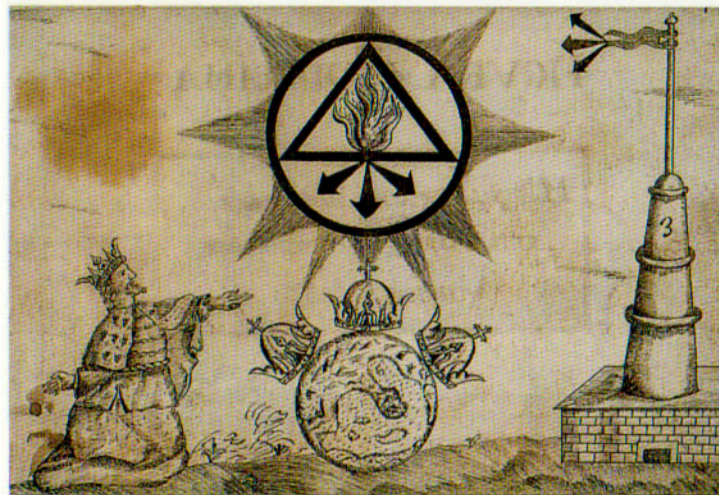


After the conclusion of the third and last Work the elixir has the power to penetrate all impure metals.



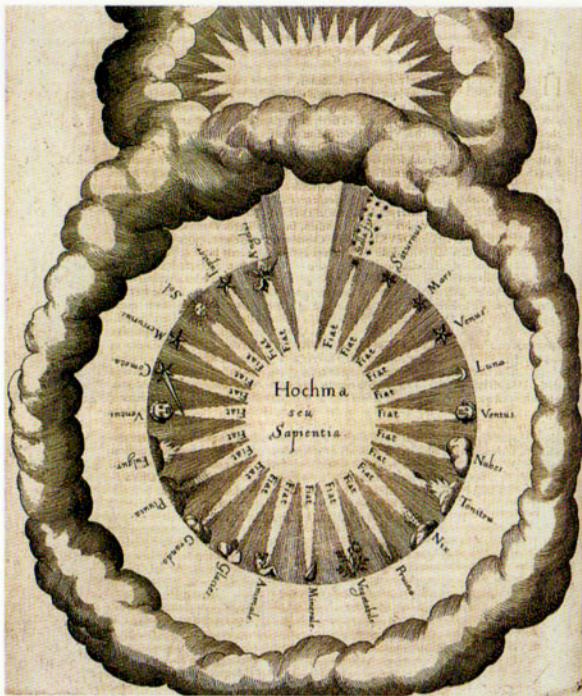


There are three Works in the *Opus Magnum*. The philosophers speak of three bowls and three degrees of fixation, indicated here by the three arrows.



Worldly power falls to its knees before the glory of the 'red son of the sun'.

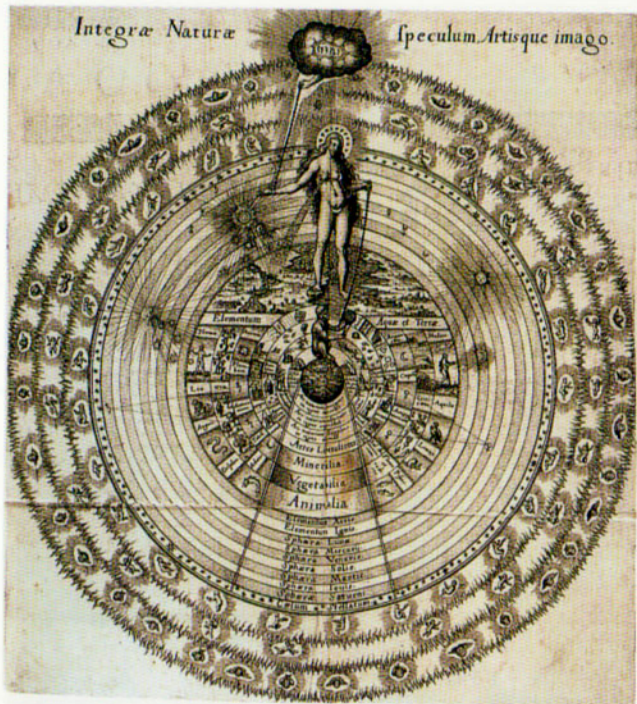
All illustrations:
Speculum veritatis,
17th century



In this illustration, Fludd followed the interpretation of Genesis in the first book of the Zohar, which provides a description of the way in which, in the concealed depths of the divine unground, there first forms a fog, from which a spring then erupts. In this, the primal point, lights up. The Ca-

balists identified this primal point as the wisdom of God, his "Sophia". It corresponds to the second Sefira Chochma or Hochma.

Robert Fludd, *Philosophia Sacra*, Frankfurt, 1626

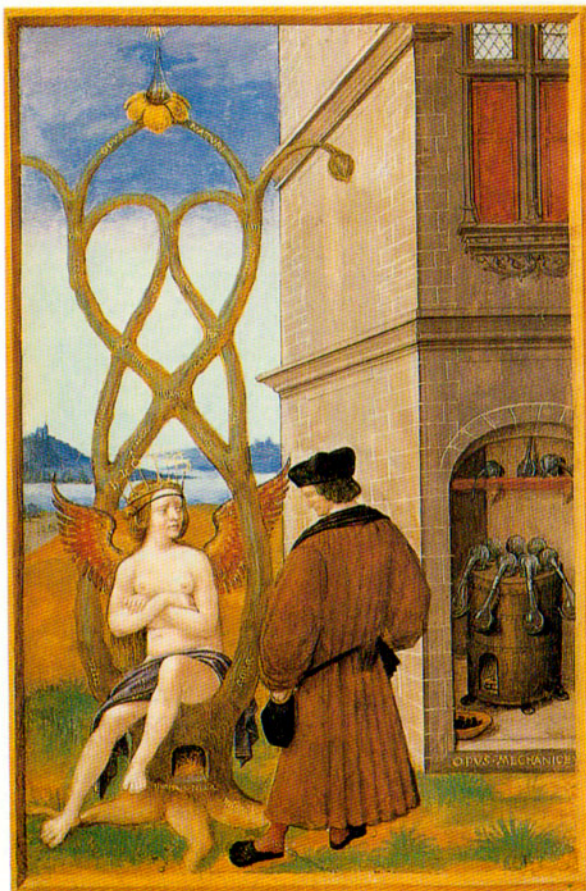


Nature, the nursing mother of all things, connects the divine fiery heaven, the astral, ethereal heaven and the sublunary, elemental world. She is the "soul of the world", the mediator between the divine spirit and material expression."

Robert Fludd, *Utriusque Cosmi*, Vol. I,
Oppenheim, 1617

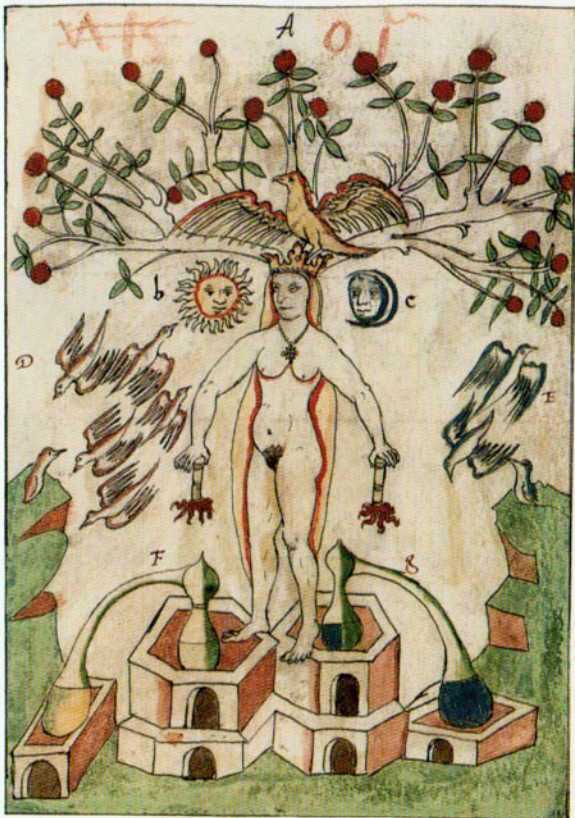
Nature advises the "aimlessly wandering alchemist" to leave the narrow circle of mechanical laboratory chymistry.

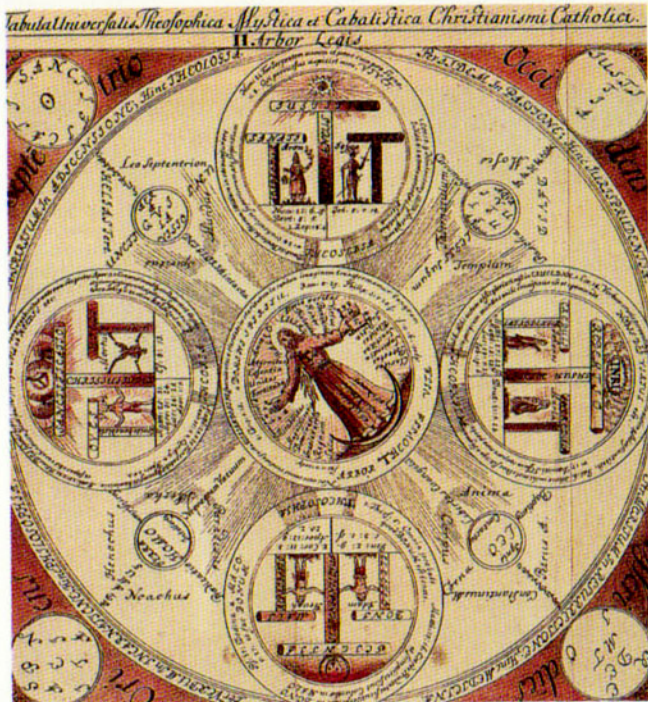
Miniature painting by Jehan Perréal, painter at the court of Margaretha of Austria, 1516



The honouring of Sophia as the mystical bride of the philosophers or 'mistress of the inner world', often intersects with worship of the divine Mercurial water.

Hieronimus Reussner, Pandora, Basle, 1582

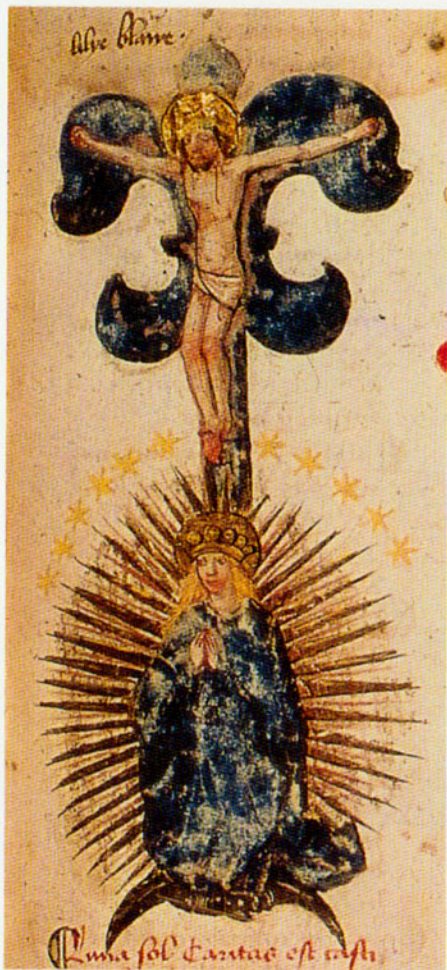




In the view of Böhmes pupil Abraham von Franckenberg, all illnesses are based on false, self-centred imaginings, which poison the astral body (the "mummy"), and thus pollute the blood. The whole balance of the elements in the body is thereby finally destroyed.

Three kinds of medicine were available: the Cabalistic, from the spirit and the word of Christ, the magical in the meditation of the healing serpent, and the Chymical, with wine and oil.

Abraham von Franckenberg, *Raphael oder Arzt-Engel*, 1639 (reprinted, 1925)



Mary and Jesus are one substance which is embodied in a condensed, solid state by the mother, and in a dissolved, spiritual state by the son. The sun symbolizes God the Father and the twelve stars the elements in the three forms of appearance, "of the spirit (son), of the soul (father) and of the corpse (mother)".

Buch der Heiligen Dreifaltigkeit, early 15th century

MICROCOSM

"The world is primarily the totality of everything,
consisting of heaven and earth (...).
In the second mystical sense, however,
it is appropriately identified as man.
For, as the world has grown out of four elements,
so does man consist of four humours (...)."
(Isidore of Seville, A.D. 560-636, De natura rerum)

Human Form Divine

The frontpiece to the first volume of *Utriusque Cosmi* shows, in the outer circle, the Ptolemaic macrocosm, whose reflection in all parts is man.

Robert Fludd,
Utriusque Cosmi,
Vol. I, Oppenheim,
1617



Human Form Divine

The last visions of Hildegard von Bingen, written down in 1163–1173, concern the involvement of man in the order of God's creation. The divine love of the son appears to her as a red, cosmic figure in the sky, dwarfed only by the goodness of the Father.

Hildegard von Bingen, Liber Divinorum Operum, 13th century

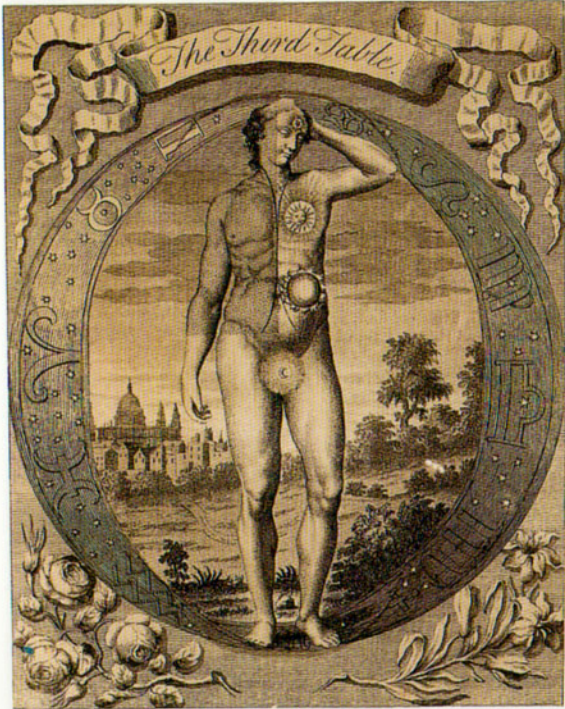


Human Form Divine

"For all are Men in
Eternity, Rivers,
Mountains, Cities,
Villages / All are
Human, & when
you enter into
their Bosoms you
walk / In Heavens
& Earths, as in
your own Bosom
you bear your
Heaven / And
Earth & all you be-
hold; tho' it ap-
pears Without, it
is Within, / In your
Imagination
(William Blake,
Jerusalem)

*William Blake, The
Sun at its Eastern
Gate, c. 1815*





"Man is made of all the forces of God, of all seven spirits of God. (...) But because he is now corrupt, the divine birth does not always swell within him. (...) For the Holy Ghost cannot be grasped and fixed in sinful flesh; but it ascends like a lightning flash (...)" (J. Böhme, *Aurora*) The ascent of this "salnitric fire-crack" through the seven source-spirits has often been compared to the awakening of the snake-fire, the *kundalini* in Hindu yoga, which rises

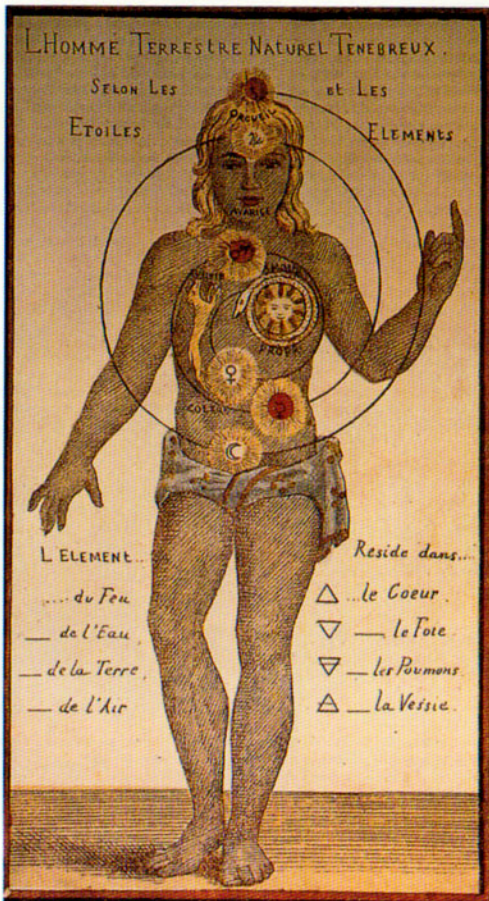
through the seven delicate centres of the body, the chakras, above the head, where it dissolves into pure knowledge.

D. A. Freher, in: *Works of J. Behmen*,
Law edition, 1764

Human Form
Divine

In his *Theosophia practica* (1696) Böhme's pupil Georg Gichtel described how the wheel of the planets lies on the body in seven diabolical seals.

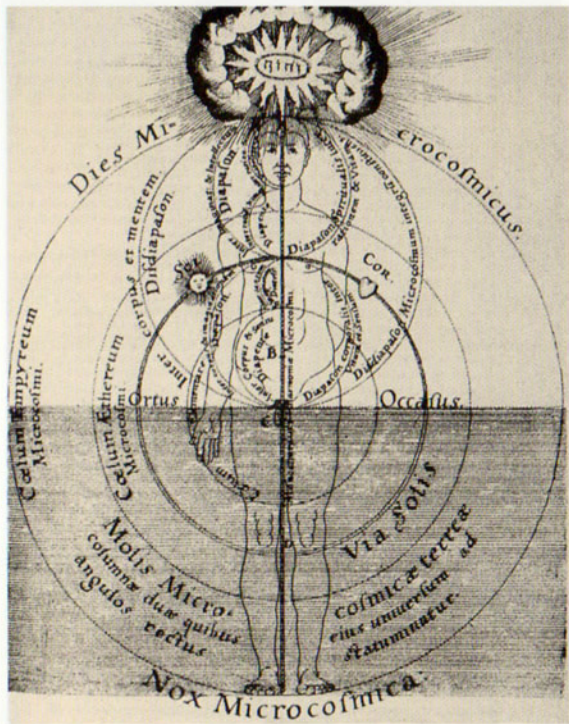
Georg Gichtel,
*Theosophia
practica*,
1898 edition



Human Form Divine

The cosmic spirit linking body and soul is represented as the string of a microcosmic, monochord. At birth, the soul descends along the marked intervals from the higher spheres in man and in death it rises back along them.

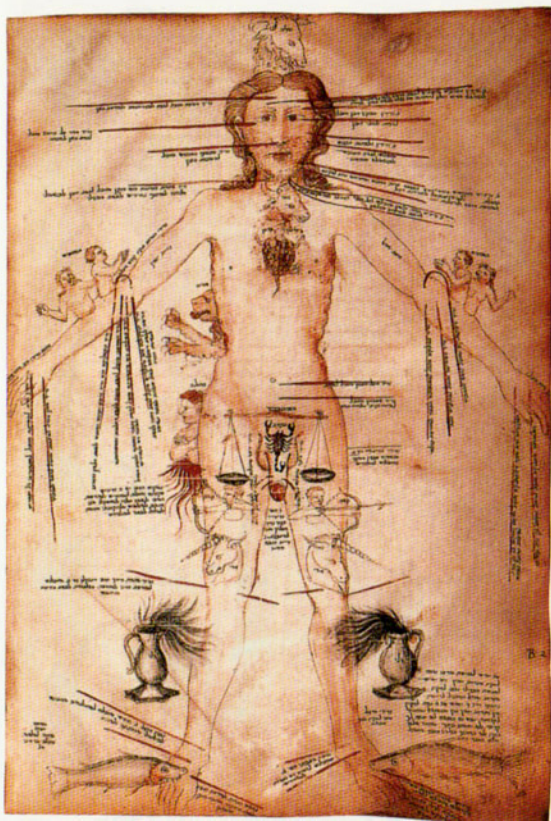
Robert Fludd,
Utriusque Cosmi,
Vol. II,
Oppenheim, 1619



Human Form Divine

The twelve signs
of the zodiac
and their influence
on the parts of the
body.

Hebrew
manuscript,
14th century



Signatures

a. Brow of a peace-loving and successful man.



a)

b. Brow of a spiritual man with an inclination towards the priesthood.



b)

c. Brow of a man who will die a violent death.



c)

d. Brow of a successful soldier.



d)

e. Brow of a man threatened by an injury to the head.



e)

f. Brow of a poisoner.



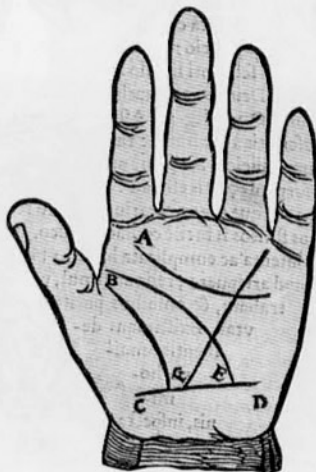
f)

From: H. Cardanus,
Metoposcopia,
Paris, 1658



- A Imperfect table line
- B Sister of the lifeline
- C Line of the liver and the stomach
- D Sister of the nature line
- E Lifeline

*Johannes ab Indagine, Introductiones
Apostelesmaticae, 1556*

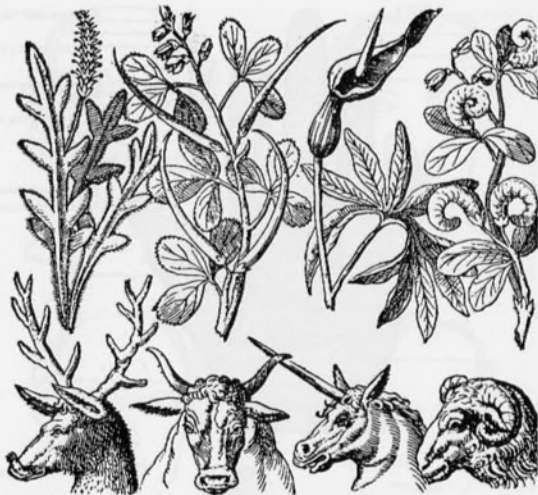


- A Line of table or fate
- B Line of life or of the heart
- E Central nature line
- F Line of liver or of the stomach

*Johannes ab Indagine, Introductiones
Apostelesmaticae, 1556*

Signatures

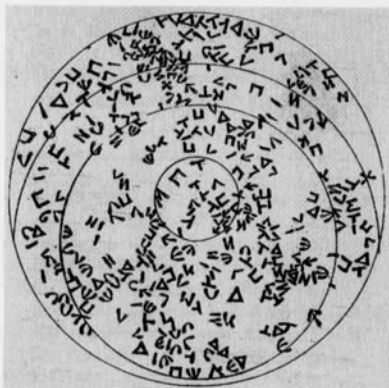
According to della Porta, the whole natural world consists of a network of secret correspondences which can be revealed through analogy. A plant leaf in the shape of a set of deer's antlers is related to the character of that animal. People who look like donkeys are stupid; Those who look like oxen are stubborn, lazy and easily irritated.



Giambattista della Porta, *De Humana Physiognomia*, 1650



The heavenly alphabet of the southern hemisphere



"In the wide space of heaven (...) are figures and signs with which one can discover the deepest secrets. They are formed by the constellations and stars (...) These brilliant figures are the letters with which the Holy and Glorious One created heaven and earth (...)." (Zohar)

Karl von Eckhartshausen, *Aufschlüsse zur Magie*, Munich, 1788

The heavenly alphabet of the northern hemisphere



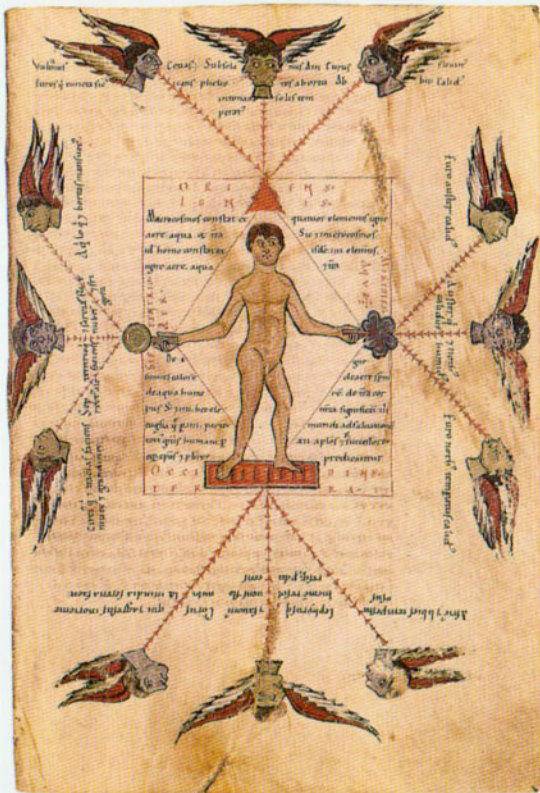
ROTATION

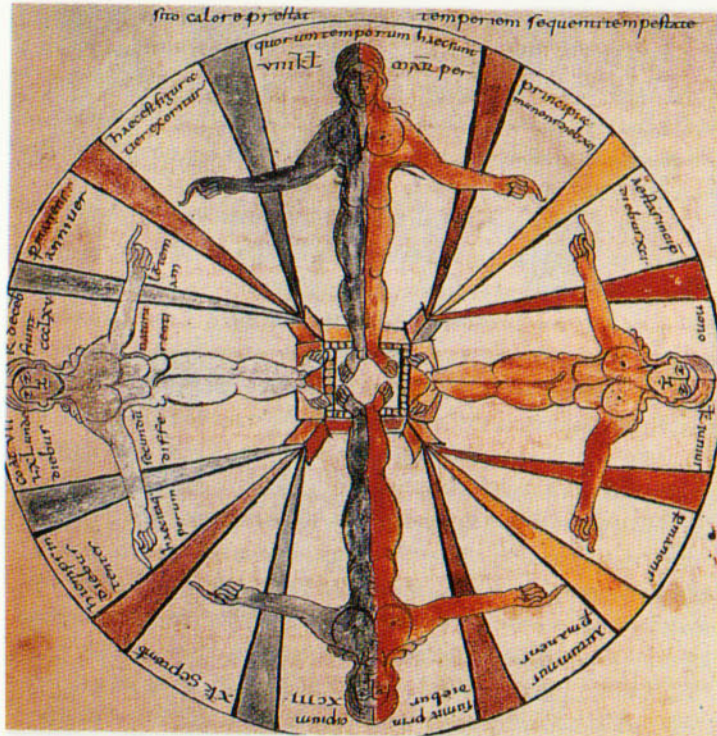
"The essence of God is like a wheel (...),
the more one looks at the wheel,
the more one learns about its shape,
and the more one learns,
the greater pleasure one has in the wheel (...)."
(J. Böhme, 1612)

Wheel

The microcosm at the intersection of the compass points, with the four main and eight subsidiary winds. The main winds correspond to the four humours.

Astronomical manuscript, Bavaria, 12th century

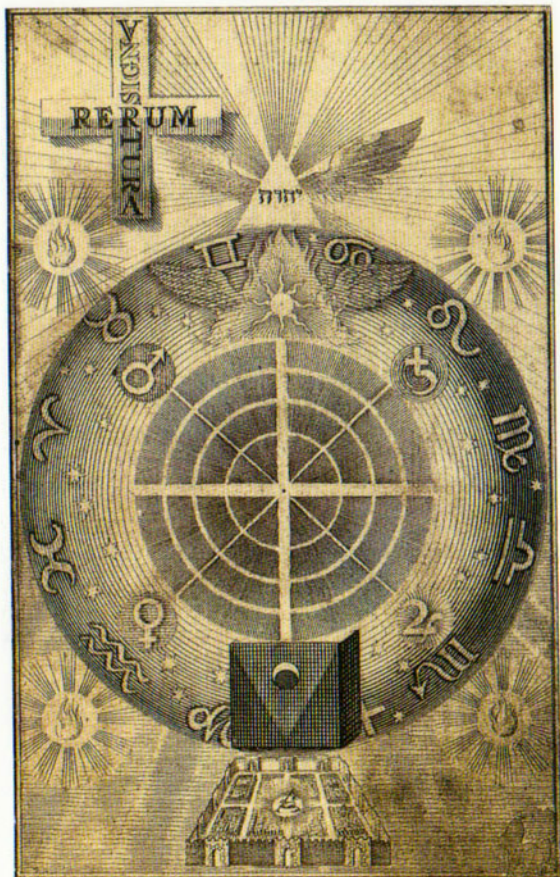


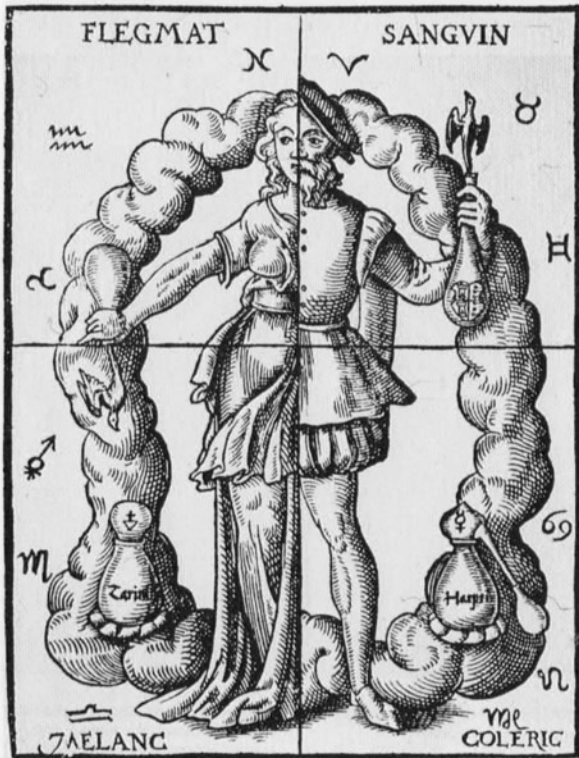


The four figures represent the seasons in the wheel of the twelve months. Their microcosmic equivalents are the four humours. Autumn corresponds to black gall (Melancholia – Earth), summer to yellow gall (Cholera – Fire), spring to the sanguine (Air) and winter to the phlegmatic humour (Water).

The properties of the seven planets or 'source spirits' in Böhme's system.

Jacob Böhme,
Theosophische
Wercke,
Amsterdam, 1682





Through the circulatory transformation of the elements and humours, the opposites are united and matter passes from its temporary, heterogeneous state into a permanent, homogeneous state.

*L. Thurneysser,
Quinta essentia,
1574*



The basic powers of man in the Indian symbol of the team of horses:

"The self (atma, the divine core of being) owns the chariot, the body is the chariot, intuitive distinction and recognition is the charioteer; the function of thought is the reins; the powers of the senses are the

horses; and the objects or spheres of sensory perception are the track. Man, in whom are combined the self and the powers of the senses and of thought, is called the eater or the enjoyer."
(Katha Upanishad, 8–6th century B.C.)

Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1987



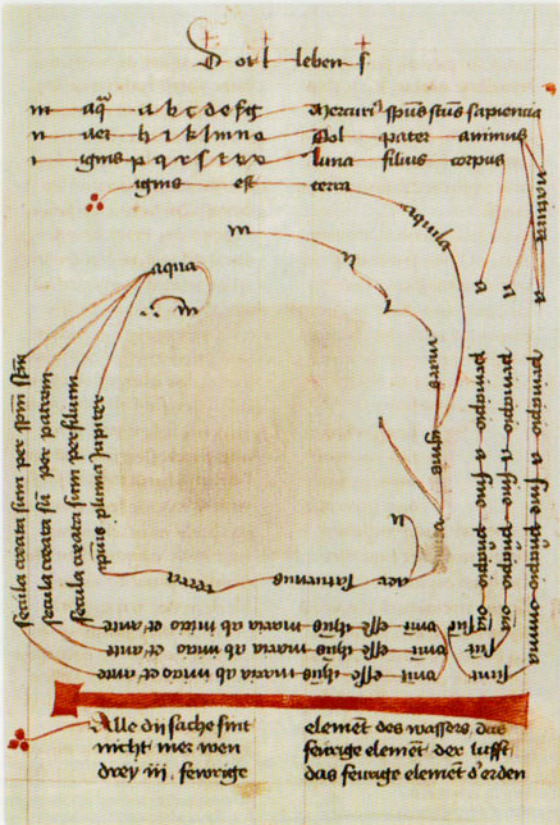
Repelling weeping Enion blind & age-bent into the four-fold
Deserts: Los first broke silence & began to utter his Love

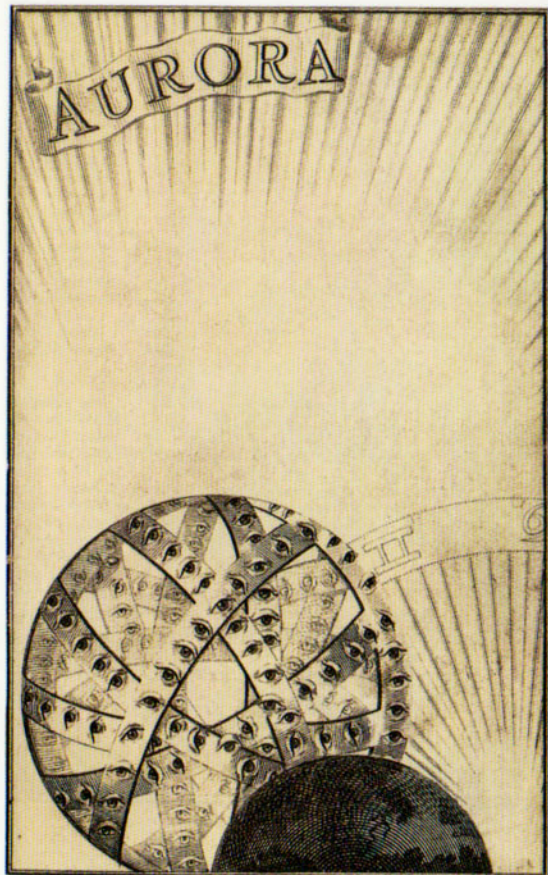
O lovely Enitharmon: I beheld thy graceful forms
Moving beside me till intoxicated with the wondrous labyrinth
Of beauty & perfection my wild fibres shoot in veins
Of blood thro' all my nervous limbs, soon overgrown in roots
Shall be closed from thy sight, surge therefore in thy hand
The small fibres as they shoot, around me draw out in pride
And let them run on the wings of thy bosom: I will fix them
In pulsations, we will divide them into sons & daughters
To live in thy bosoms transference as in an eternal morning

Enitharmon answered, No! I will seize thy Fibres & weave
Them; not as thou wilt, but as I will, for I will create
A round Worm beneath my bosom, lest I also be overwoven
With Love; be thou assured I never will be thy slave
Let Mans delight be Love; but Womens delight be Pride
In Eden our Loves were the same here they are opposite
I have Loves of my own I will weave them in Almonds, Spectre
Cast thou in Jerusalem's shadows thy Loves; silk of liquid
Rubies, Jacaranda's Crystals, assured from thy Furnaces, while
Jerusalem divides thy care; while thou art for Jerusalem
Know that I never will be thine; also thou hastest Yala
I am her these fibres shoot to shut me in a Grave.
You are Albions Victim, he has set his Daughter in your path

In William Blake's mythology, the zoas are
the "four Mighty Ones in every Man",
they embody his "eternal senses", and
their four faces look in the
direction of all four worlds.

*Buch der Heiligen
Dreifaltigkeit, early
15th century*





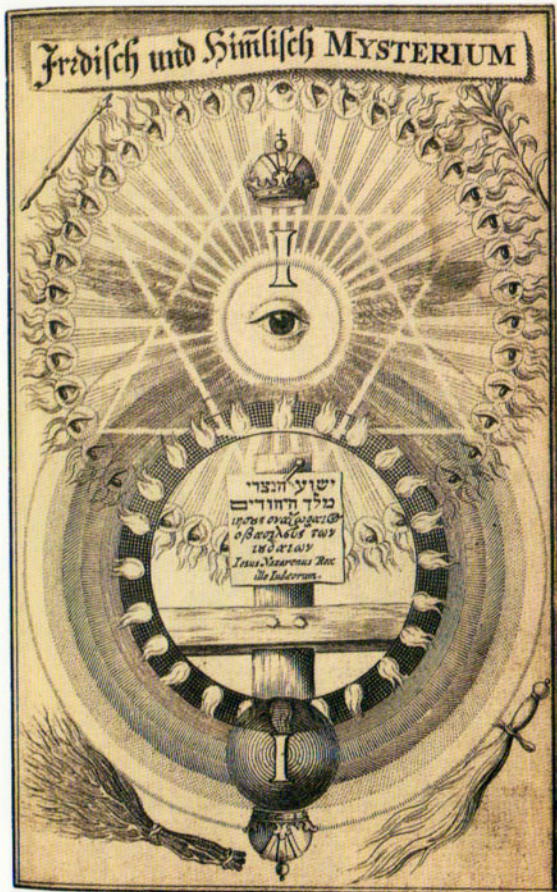
"If I should describe to you the godhead (...) in the greatest depth, it is thus: as if a wheel stood before you with seven wheels, one made into the other (...)." ."

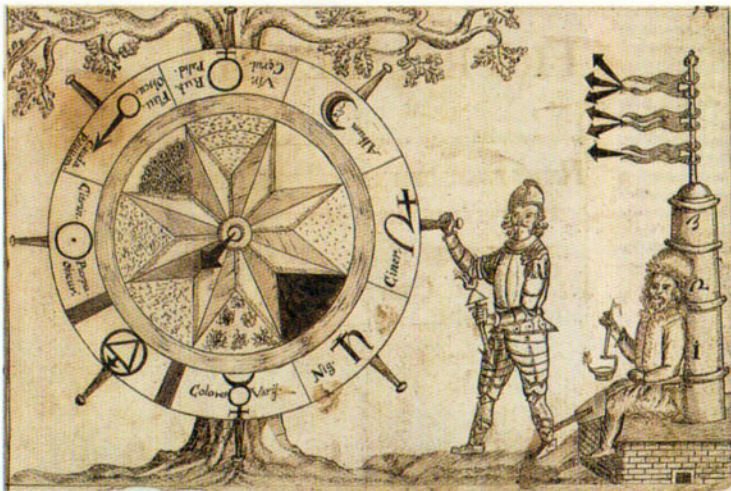
*Jacob Böhme,
Theosophische
Wercke,
Amsterdam, 1682*

From the 'Centrum Naturae', the salnitric cross-ground, there emerges in various degrees of the mixture of fire and water the mystery of colours.

1. Blue: entity
2. Red: father in the brilliance of fire
3. Green: life
4. Yellow; son
5. White: brilliance of God's majesty as a quint-essence.

Jacob Böhme,
Theosophische
Wercke,
Amsterdam, 1682



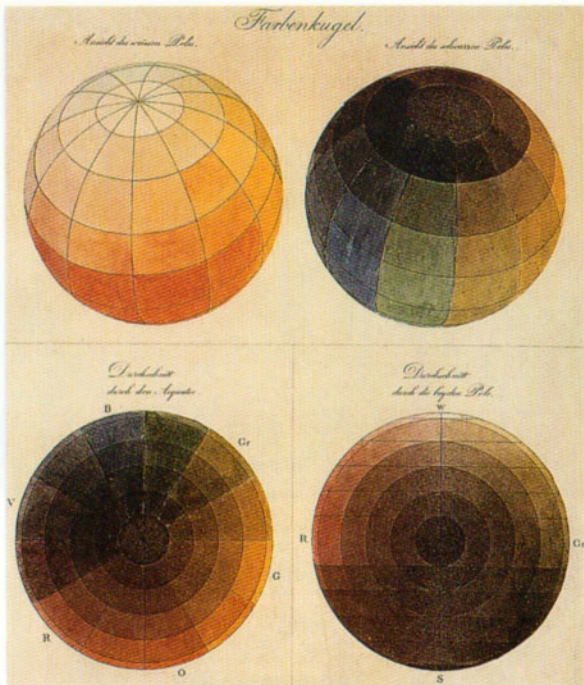


Cadmus, the serpent-slayer, who embodies the fixing properties of sulphur, is seen here giving the philosophical colour-wheel its first rotation.

Speculum veritatis, 17th century

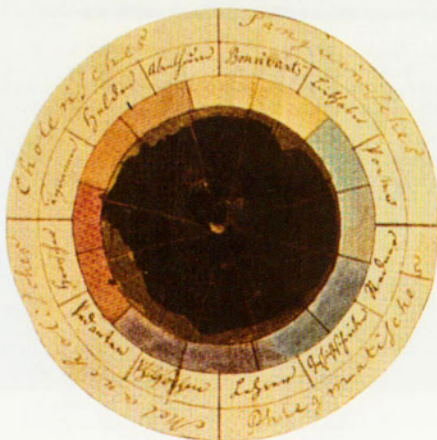
Wheel

Influenced by Jacob Böhme's writings, which the writer Ludwig Tieck had recommended to him in 1801, P. O. Runge began to develop his own mystical colour theory, which he applied in all his painting.

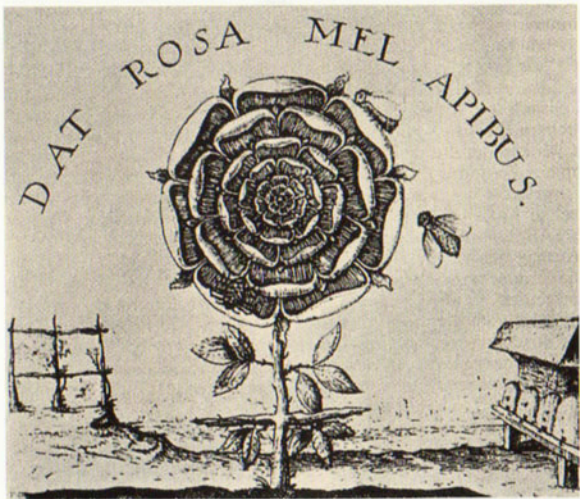




Goethe, who built on the mystical colour-theories of the alchemists, tried to connect the qualities of colours as experienced by the senses with ethical categories. Here he assigns the four spiritual capacities of man to the six colours of his circle.



On this "rose of the humours", a collaboration between Goethe and Schiller in 1799, the four humours of man are assigned to Goethe's colour circle.



In alchemy, the white and the red rose are well-known symbols for the lunar and the solar tincture, from which the "precious rose-coloured blood" of Christ-Lapis flows.

Robert Fludd, *Summum Bonum*, Frankfurt, 1629

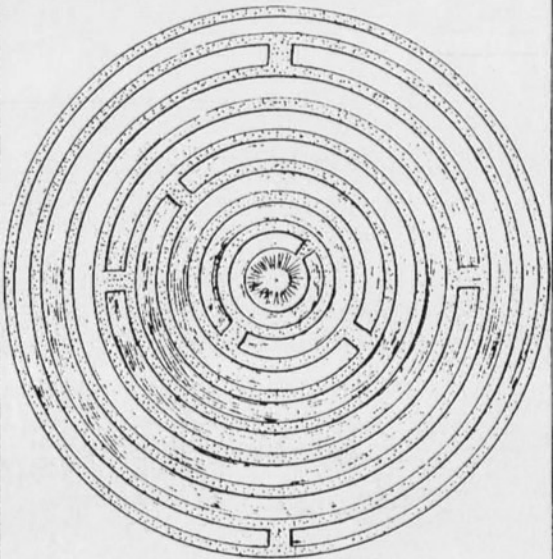


The evening before Easter an angel gives the legendary founder of the Rosicrucian order, Christian Rosencreutz, an invitation to the mystical wedding of bride and bridegroom. With a blood-red sash hung across his white apron, and with four red roses on his hat, he sets off the following day.

Johann Valentin Andreae, Die Alchemische Hochzeit von Christian Rosenkreuz (1616), Ed. J. van Rijckenborgh, 1967

D. A. Freher, Paradoxa Emblemata, manuscript, 18th century

*There is no coming to the ^{113.}
One with one jump;*



and none, without going about



The soul of the
Christian pilgrim is
guided by the
word of God.

*Hermann Hugo,
Gottselige
Begierde,
Augsburg, 1622*

William Blake developed a special reversed process for etching, which is continually reflected in his writing: the spaces which are etched away are "the transient individual conditions", which disappear in the purifying fires of the last Judgment. What remains are the "eternal lineaments", the "signatures of all things".



"Let us leave theories there and return to here's hear." (James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*)

Marcel Duchamp,
*Door as a substitute
for two doors*,
Paris, 1927

